000

Totemism Among the Fang
[Le Totémisme chez les Fân]

R.P.H. Trilles

Bibliothèque-Anthropos, Vol. 1

Münster i. W., 1912

Translated from the French by Isabella Athey

Human Relations Area Files

1959

[title page]

[11]

Chapter I

The Fan Tribe

000 1. Divisions of the Fan Nation. "Fan" and "Pahouin" are two words not only synonymous but identical. The four Fan groups. Tribe, clan, and family (elementary cell).

2. Allied Tribes. Likenesses and differences between the Fan and related and so-called related tribes.

3. Size of Population. Errors in official statistics.

1. Divisions of the Fan Nation

101 Before beginning this study, a word ought first to be said about the Fan [Fang] nation and its divisions into groups, tribes, and clans. [Footnote omitted. --Translator]

The Fan or Pahouin [Pàhuin] or Mpawin [Mpangwe] (2) --

101
191 2. The word "Fâṅ" is the truly native word to designate this tribe. Strange as it may seem at first glance and in spite of the great change, "Pahouin" is another form of the same word. The first tribes on the coast with whom we were in contact called the Fâṅ "Mpâṅ," or mu-pâń (pân, man), abbreviated to mpân by a process common among these African languages. Thus mpira, powder, in Mpongwe becomes efira in Fan; mpilatò, tray, becomes filato; epélé plate, from Spanish "plata," becomes mfil by way of plata, epilata, épila, épèle, efèl, mfèle, mfil, etc. Out of "Mpâṅ," a word which only the tribes

101
197 of the Nsex branch pronounce this way, the northern tribes -- Kombɛ, Banoko, and others belonging to the Mpongwɛ branch -- have made "Mpangwɛ, as none of the languages of the Gabon or Mpongwɛ group let a word end with a consonant but always require a vowel. "Mpangwɛ" became "Mpangwen" for the French and soon thereafter "Mpangwin"; it has now turned into "Mpawin," "Pawin," and finally "Pahouin," in which form it is indeed difficult to recognize the original.

101 because these three words [12] refer to the same people -- are the most important tribe of the French Congo and the German [now French] Cameroons.

101
197 The Fan proper are divided into four distinct families with respect to dialects: Bɛtsi [Betsi], Mɛkɛ [Mekei], Fɔ̂n, and Bulɛ [Boale] (in manners and customs they are all absolutely alike). These four groups do not speak such different dialects that they cannot understand one another unless at first meeting; they certainly do so after several days of association.

[Five paragraphs in pp. 12-13 deleted here. --Translator]

101 [13] [Of the four groups] the first two are by far the best known, having made the first migrations or at least having been the first in contact with the white man. Everything that has been written about the Fan relates to these [two], particularly to the Bɛtsi.

The Bulɛ group is often considered to be connected with either the Fan or the Yaundɛ, through whom it would form the intermediary link with the Mɛkɛ. The Fɔ̂n (1), or people of the interior, as the etymology of their name indicates, have remained up to the present time altogether inland beyond the Bɛtsi and

[197
194] Mɛkɛ. Their dialect relates them to the Bɛtsi, differing in being more guttural. The tribes live closely intertwined in the same

---

1. Fɔ̂n, bamboo pith, dark depths of the forest.

101 territory, though each keeps its own autonomy without intermingling.

101 Each of the four Fan groups are divided into tribes, each
619 with its own chief, territory, and autonomy; none is subordinate
727 to another, all the more so because slaves are not taken in war,
266 for unredeemed captives are promptly eaten.

619 The tribes vary in importance according to the level of
614 development, the kind of chiefs they have had, and the size of
174 their territory. Thus, the Yenkwax possess no more than three sparsely populated villages, and at the most they can muster 300 warriors; the Yengon, [14] though a long-established tribe, have only one village and a few warriors; while the Yemvi, on the contrary, inhabit several hundred villages and number thousands of warriors. But about this term "tribe," let me here mention a very important point: at present, and since a migration which, according to my own research, should be dated 32 or 33 generations back, no more tribes are being formed, only clans. Existing tribes (and we shall see in a moment how they may be distinguished from clans) may be said to have been established about ten centuries ago in our reckoning, which clearly does not mean that they did not exist before that time. Their origin must certainly go back much earlier.

619 A tribe rarely remains homogeneous for long. Many factors
614 contribute to its splitting up, such as a series of migrations, family disputes, and the activities of heads of families who are ambitious or eager to throw off excessive authority. The steady growth of a tribe at the same time leads to the overpopulation of villages and the necessity of looking elsewhere for new hunting and agricultural lands; hence, after an indefinite period, a tribe splits into clans composed of an unspecified and highly variable number of families. Some clans are very large, such as the Esingi, and make up hundreds of villages, while others, either because they are very recent or because of the same disintegrating forces as exist for the tribes, number only a few families.

Clans in turn, as a result of the same circumstances that made tribes split into clans, split into subclans, also of varying importance.

From what I have just said, a fact may be immediately deduced which runs counter to the usual generalizations accepted by Europeans and superficial observers. In the view of the latter the

619 distribution of the nation and its division into tribes and clans is
614 based upon an arbitrary and highly variable standard; the number of individuals.

In my view on the contrary -- and this is certainly that of the Fan -- the different concepts of nation, tribe, clan, and subclan have a unique, immutable basis, the family, [15] which constitutes the kernel or, of one prefers, the primary cell or even the pivot on which the whole organization turns.

Thus we have the following structural table:

Family or *Ndzân*	Family
^	^
Clans and subclans (phratries) or *Ayum*	Clans and subclans
v	v
Tribe or *Ayôn*	Tribe
v	v
Group or *Mfulana* *méyon*	Group
^	
Fan Nation	

This structure has an important consequence, one whose development will not, however, be dealt with here but must be postponed until after discussion of the idea of the totem. The consequence is this: among clans some bear the totem name, others do not. Although some, in fact nearly all, writers consider that bearing the totem name is a condition *sine qua non* of totemism in clans, we shall see that this idea is exaggerated and that clans, with or without a totem name, are all totemic.

2. Allied Tribes

101 Not only do these four large divisions -- Bétsi, Méké,
619 Bulé, and Fôñ -- make up the Fan nation proper, but a certain number of other tribes revolve within their circle and are connected to the same branch. I say "a certain number" because the interior of the German Cameroons and the hinterland lying between the Woleu, N'tem, and upper Sanga rivers has been little explored. Before our arrival the existence of the Dzèm [Njem] was barely known; the Dzandzama had never been mentioned. These tribes form the intermediary link connecting the Fan to the Batéké branch and through this to the Kanioka and other central Congo tribes, [16] whose folklore has analogies with that of the Fan as I recently pointed out. (1)

A Yaundé grammar was published not long ago in Anthropos; (2) these people are without doubt an offshoot of the Bétsi branch. The Bosyéba dialect is somewhat different and is nearer that of the Bubi of Fernando Po; the group also belongs to the Fan nation. Finally, deviating from the primitive stock in progressive order, there are the Dzèm, Dzimu [Ndsime], and Dzandzama, nowadays scarcely leaving the jungle and the country of the Nyamnyam [Niam-Niam, Azande]. In spite of what has
197 been said of them in the past, their language is only distantly related to that of the last tribe. (3)

1. See Anthropos, Vol. 4, pp. 945-971; Vol. 5, pp. 163-180.

2. See Anthropos, Vol. 4, pp. 684-701, 919-930.

3. Since certain observers and explorers -- such, for instance, as Allegret, a former Protestant missionary in Gabon, who connects them with the Nyamnyam, Fulah,

197

Azande groups -- insist on this relationship based only on apparent ethnographic characters, let me simply give this table of the four languages, Fan, Osyeba [Osieba], Dzèm (unpublished), and Nyamnyam (after Schweinfurth and Colombaroli):

	Fan.	Osyeba	Dzèm	Nyamnyam
Man	Mur	Muri	Murum	Combâ
Woman	Munga	Mura	Muma	Dè
Girl	Ngon	Šyè	Lêsi	Dégudè
Old man	Ntôl	Ntôli	Tuma	Binzâ
Sister	Kal	Kali	Kalo	Béwili
Father	Sa	Sôṅ	Da	Ba (éba in Fan-méké)
Name	Džu	Džina	Ndžè	Limô
Body	Ñul	Mulé	Ñulo	Kuô
Skin	Eko	Kundé	Kuro	Kuôto
Head	Nlô	Nlô	Nlô	Li
Forehead	Mvabal	Bandé	Nbalopum	Vu
Tongue	Dèm (pl. Mèm)	Gimi	Gyèm	Mirassè
Village	Džal	Kware	Kwor	Lingara
Door	Mbi	Mbié	Lébaa	Ngwadumo (lit., house door; duma, nest in Fan)

As the footnote shows, the differences between Fan and Nyamnyam are tremendous. Scarcely 150 words could be found with the same root, and even those would prove nothing, for the Fan have certainly [17] been in contact with the Nyamnyam during their migrations and therefore could, and must have, borrowed a number of words.

101 619 To sum up, the Fan may be divided as follows:

I II

- Fan or Pahuoin
  - Fan proper
    - Bétsi
      - Yaundé
      - Bétsi
    - Méké
    - Bulé
    - Fôṅ
  - Bosyéba
    - Bosyéba
    - Mékux
  - Bésèx
  - Dzèm
  - Dzandzama
  - Guma

197 The Fan, Bosyéba, Bésèx, Dzèm, Dzandzama, and Guma tribes may be assumed to speak separate languages not dialects of one. These languages are, however, closely related; they have very nearly the same principles and are cognates.

Bétsi, Méké, etc., merely represent dialects.

[One paragraph deleted, repititive. --Translator]

101 619 161 The Dzèm, whose hitherto unpublished language I hope to make known soon, are grouped in the upper N'tem region; their population should not be more than 100,000.

The Dzandzama border them on the southeast and provide a linguistic link to the Batéké, southern neighbors; their population is about that of the Dzèm.

The Bésèx, or Bulu, who occupy a large part of the region to the north of the Ogooue, are a widely dispersed tribe, formerly very powerful, now almost extinct through poison, practitioners [feticheurs], and pressure from the Pahuoin. Their population is not likely to be greater than a few thousand. [18]

101 The Bosyéba ... are no more numerous than the Bésèx.
619 They have been classed perhaps wrongly as a separate people
161 and in my opinion are basically only tribes long detached from
the Méké branch, whose distinctive tattooing and little altered
language they have preserved. In 1889 when Fourneau reached
[114] the Bosyéba country to the north of the Campo, he saw his
porters, recruited in Méké country on the banks of the Ogooué,
immediately fraternizing with the Bosyéba and delighted to
discover their own tongue after crossing through Bétsi territory. (1)

1. Cf. A. Fourneau, "De l'Ogooué au Campo" [From the Ogooué to the Campo], Bull. Ste. Geogr. Vol. 12 (1891), pp. 190-215.

[One paragraph deleted about an etymology which author considers "incorrect."--Translator]

The Guma, nowadays very few in number, have been driven back towards the Cameroons; they also are related to the Méké branch. Europeans often refer to the people of this whole group by the term "Makina" from ma ki na, "I say that..."; they have, in fact, a habit of starting all their remarks with these words. The Bétsi are called "Mazuna" for the same reason.

3. Size of the Fan Population

161 The Fan are by far the most important branch. It is extremely difficult to estimate their number. Officially they are only a few hundred thousand. But the official figure is far from accurate, for government statistics only count the man who pays taxes. Furthermore, more than half of the French Congo is unexplored except by a few, infrequent

161 travelers. Thus in 1901-02 we were the first to explore the whole of the north Congo, which Crampel had only crossed before, and then the Dzèm and Dzandzama country; after us the boundary commission for the Cameroons came into a small part of the same country, and that was all. Thus a recent publication [19] gives the number of Fan warriors at about 40,000, a figure that is not even worth discussing. (1) What is certain is that the

[614] 1. One clan, the Amvom, exceeds this figure. The Bulé are larger; there are more than 400 Fan clans, at least that we know of. In terms of the official estimate each clan would have only about 100 armed men. In many cases this would barely be the number of villages.

total population of the French Congo, of which the Fan possibly compose half, may be estimated at a figure varying from three to ten million, and it is impossible to be more accurate at the present time. In my view we should estimate the Fan at five million at least, teh to twelve at the most. The Woleu basin alone, where we have determined the location of all the villages, includes more than a million Fan.

144 The Fan belong to the great Bantu family, but they represent an outer link or, rather, they are situated at the boundary separating the Bantu from the populations and languages of the northeast, those of Libya, Sudan, etc. They are, as Reclus says, the least Bantu of all the Bantu.

[pp. 20-397 not translated. -Analyst]

Chapter XII

The Ministers of the Mvamayôṅ

[Summary omitted. --Translator]

779 The mvamayôṅ, or totem, has "rights" by the very fact of its existence.

These rights may be summed up in the three following points: the totem has a right to ministers, to rites or a cult, to laws. These last include duties, prohibitions, and penalties. . . .

The first problem that arises concerns the totem's ministers. Who is the minister of the mvamayôn, that is, what sort of person has the right, first to choose it, then to assign it [399] either to an isolated individual or to an organized collectivity, then to decide on its cult and observances, to see that its rites are respected, to declare penalties or at least to impose them?

According to the structure of the tribe and the formation of the family . . . this role falls by right to the father of a family to the exclusion of all other persons whatsoever, but the father of a family taken in the most general sense, that is, as father of a clan or, better, of a tribe.

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

The individual person, as a single and isolated individuality; the father of a family; the chief of a clan or tribe; the council of warriors, who have gone through initiation tests and have been admitted to the assembly that regulates vital village interests; the practitioner [feticheur] entrusted with public and recognized worship; the sorcerer [sorcier] with whom he is often confused -- these are the only distinct categories to which this role could be ascribed.

We must immediately exclude "the individual person," who has no rights over the mvamayôn, which belongs to the whole tribe and existed before him; the same applies to the clan and family totem.

[400] [Five paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [401]

. . . It is easy to understand that the guardians of the totem's authority, and only they, are entitled to decide where, when, how, and in what circumstances or with what preliminaries, the totem must be found. It is for them to say what marks it ought to show and for them to reject it if the necessary conditions are not existent. Finally, it is they who set up and preserve the cult and the form of ancestral traditions.

The role can only belong to the sole guardian of totemic authority, that is, to the chief or, if one prefers, to the existing esayôn, the living representative and trustee of the spirit of the founding ancestor of the tribe or clan.

779 [Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [402]

791 Sometimes in very important tribes, especially in those that make up large, compact groups, this role of minister to the mvamayôṅ has developed temporarily upon the practitioner.

Sometimes practitioners take on the role themselves and hold it by their personal importance or ability.

In both cases a kind of usurpation is always involved or a mixing up of powers, rarely a substitution. The practitioner then acts not in his own name by virtue of his role and his own authority, but as a delegated power. ...

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator] [403]

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

779
791
614
769
Thus in certain specific cases the political chief of the clan leaves the exercise of religious worship to the practitioner even with regard to the totem. Yet this is only a delegated role to the extent that when the totem has to be questioned in a critical situation, the practitioner disappears and the chief resumes his rights: it would then be up to him to carry out ritual acts and make sacrifices. A chief may not be able to do this, [404] for instance, if he were very ill. A sacrifice is then offered to the totem directly concerned. Does the practitioner now come to the fore? Not at all. He first sacrifices to the tutelary spirits and spirits of the dead, and then he interrogates the spirits in order to find out what evil influences have caused the illness and to discover the person who, in the sacred phrase, has "made a fetish" against the sick man. The consanguineous heir appears in his turn to invoke the family's guardian spirits in favor of the sick man and to invoke his totem. In this case, invocations and sacrifice have a dual purpose: first, to invoke the direct ancestors represented by their skulls preserved in the biéri box -- this is the cult of the esayôṅ; secondly, to invoke the totem represented by a real or symbolic fragment -- this is the cult of the mvamayôṅ.

[Four paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [405]

791
757
There are two distinct characters: practitioner [feticheur] and sorcerer.

The practitioner takes several forms: he may be soothsayer, physician, priest -- all different manifestations of the same ministry and all legal. In a word, the practitioner is the agent of the acknowledged cult.

791 754 The sorcerer also assumes several forms: he may be soothsayer, physician, priest, etc., but none of these different manifestations are either legal or accepted; they will always operate in a secret manner, and the sorcerer will be the agent of the secret and unacknowledged, the extralegal, cult. [406]

515 754 791 Just as we find two distinct persons nearly always in opposition, so we observe them presiding over two distinct types of association. And, unfortunately, just as practitioner and sorcerer have almost always been confused, so have the true secret societies directed by the former been confused with the secret societies (organized also within the tribe) that are quite different, often antagonistic, and under the authority of sorcerers, who create them and without whom they do not operate. The former are established to work for the well-being of the tribe, at least they were so originally and they still are on the whole at the present time. The others, on the contrary, are set up for the specific benefit of members and against the tribe.

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

The principal point at issue here is that the totems of secret societies directed by practitioners and the totems of secret societies directed by sorcerers are utterly different. We shall see later on how incorrect the term "totem" is in connection with sorcerers. While the first kind of totem are chosen entirely for the benefit of the individual who acquires them with no concern about the effect on others, the second are chosen by the owner with a view to the evil he can do with them to others. [407] Hence a profound difference in their selection: the first, like the totems of clan and tribe, can legally be any kind of living thing and are in fact, animals, birds, insects, trees, but only useful things, because the point is to benefit from their good qualities. There is nothing of this in connection with the second kind of totem: to injure others is the point, the unique purpose, the raison d'être; therefore, harmful animals like panthers, reptiles, and wild boars will be the first choice.

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [408-414 omitted]

[415] The practitioner's business is to have an effect upon good and bad "spirits." To call up good spirits as we see for

515 instance in the invocations of marriage songs; to fend off bad
754 spirits, departed shades, ghosts, or apparitions and force them
791 out of the village so they they will go far away and leave the
living in peace; in brief, to protect in some manner those who invoke them -- this is the practitioner's role. The end is achieved through appropriate homage and sacrifices, either directly, by protecting the suppliant from bad luck and accidents, or indirectly, by making it impossible for the enemy -- whether spirit, shade, man, or object -- to do harm. All this is worship, religion, the practitioner's role.

But, on the other hand, to be master of these spirits, preferably of the malevolent ones, to seize the spirits, and to force both to do evil, is no longer worship or religion, but magic, and this is the sorcerer's business.

[Four paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [416]

We make the following generalizations:

The practitioner is the agent of the acknowledged cult, which is sometimes public, sometimes secret.

The sorcerer is the agent of the unacknowledged cult, which is always secret.

Both practitioner and sorcerer are leaders or members of secret societies. (1)

Secret societies controlled by practitioners are within the tribe.

Secret societies controlled by sorcerers are marginal to, or directed against, the tribe.

1. In place of "secret societies," which leads to confusion, it would be better to reserve this term, as has been proposed, for the societies set up by sorcerers and to use "confraternities" for those directed by practitioners.

791 Finally, the practitioner is priest, physician, healer, seer, according to whatever function his rank has him perform. Under this title he consults the fates, calls up spirits, etc. In ceremonies of the public cult, for instance, he is priest, seer, rain maker, the acknowledged intermediary between the world of the living and the other world. To sum up, he acts for the welfare of the tribe or of some of its members. In the last capacity he is seen as sacrificer at a child's birth, and as the principal agent in circumcision and in the ceremonies connected with puberty, the initiation of warriors, marriage, and death. He is called in for all illnesses so as to drive away the malevolent spirits who alone cause disease. [413] As physician he first uses magical formulae designed to liberate the good "influences" contained in the remedies he will administer. Next, he dispels evil "spirits" and calls upon favorable spirits, the ancestors of the race, to help him. Only after this does he proceed to give the remedy; then he again calls upon the aid of propitious spirits and dispels the bad ones. ...

Our Fan give the practitioner a special name; he is the ngâṅ, a name common to the whole of Bantu Africa, where the phoneme [sic] may be found throughout the tribes, variously modified as m-gâṅa, n-gâṅa, m-hâṅa, gâṅa, ngâṅ. ...

[Last paragraph on p. 417 omitted; pp. 418 to mid-420 omitted. --Translator] [420]

754 The sorcerer's social position is easily defined; not only does he have neither rank nor position in the tribe but even to apply the word "sorcerer" ... to a native is more than an insult, it is extremely imprudent. To call a Fan ngâṅ or ngenngâṅ is doing him an honor; if he is not a practitioner, he will give you credit for your good intentions and courtesy. Call him nlèm [he who casts bait] and the situation is quite different. First, he will peer around to see if anyone has overheard. If you are alone with him and [421] the stronger, or if he fears retaliation, you will be lucky to escape the gunshot or knife stab he will gladly give you, or the poison he might give you as soon as he has a chance. If there are people around in the village, it [683] would constitute a serious accusation, which might cost him his life....

754 In fact, the sorcerer is the person hated and feared above all others, the evildoer, whom one consults only when forced to it, because he controls occult forces and his power is recognized. . . .

Nevertheless, in spite of this, sorcerers exist and will continue to do so for a long time for two reasons:

1. their social position in the tribe, not as sorcerers -- for I have just said that they have none on that score -- but because of their own personalities;

2. the fear they inspire, which will eventually lead to their death, but which does help them to maintain their positions.

754 791 Clearly, in everyday life and through the course of events, practitioner and sorcerer are often combined in the same person. A certain man, a religious minister respected by his family, a physician, and practitioner esteemed publicly, may also be a sorcerer, but then in the greatest secrecy, unless his position allows him to proclaim this attribute. In that case he will be universally feared and hated and will only keep going through terror and murder, and he will always fear for his life.

[Pp. 422, 423, omitted.--Translator] [424]

791 The practitioner carries on the cult and is the totem's minister only by a sort of delegation, a handing over of power from the head of a family. He has been seen in this capacity performing his part in important totemic ceremonies alongside the tribal chief, regulating ritual under his direction, in short, acting as his organizer, master of ceremonies, sacrificial assistant. In practice he often comes to supplant the chief and afterwards to transmit to his descendants the religious power usurped.

Even this predominant role will not be thought sufficient by the ngâṅa [practitioner]. He wants complete ascendancy and he attains it through the secret societies in which he alone is master, which have little by little encroached on the tribal organization and tend to supplant the family power of former times. In this way he is the true and sole minister of the totem of these societies.

754 But alongside the ngâṅa and the secret societies he organizes and controls, hidden as it were in their underworld, are the sorcerers, or bĕyèm, who are similarly ministers of totems which they have given to the secret societies they control -- ministers,

754 societies, and totems that are basically actually spurious copies of the first.

754 791 From this we are led to a study of the secret societies directed by both and of the very different, though often undifferentiated, role that practitioners [béñgan] and sorcerers [béyèm] play in them.

Chapter XIII

Practitioners and Sorcerers

Their Secret Societies

[Pp. 425-433 omitted, being mainly taken up with the theories of others. --Translator]

[434[[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

575 In my opinion the secret society is derived from the tribal organization itself. The dominating position which the practitioner has been able to assume [in the secret society] comes from the role he has necessarily been called upon to play in the ordinary course of events. Similarly, the new totems given to initiates after initiation are only imitations of those bestowed upon them by their fathers at birth.

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

575 791 Before youths are admitted to membership with warriors, it seems quite natural to put them through a series of tests designed to prove whether they are really fit to play their part and to perform the services which the tribe demands of them. Consequently, girls and women are immediately eliminated, for the benefit of the male population. The series of tests cannot take place in the village in front of everyone; the compulsory elimination of some would, aside from other considerations, arouse violent resentment against the leaders and be followed by inevitable revenge. Hence the necessity for withdrawing to the background. The chief may appoint a representative, for instance an outstanding warrior, but there is no one better [435] fitted than the practitioner for this role and for taking a leading and soon

515 191 exclusive position. Religion must, in fact, be an important and necessary element in these gatherings. For is it not necessary for the ancestral spirits to be consulted, to be made interested in their young descendants and their spirits made to enter into them; and is it not necessary to attract good influences and keep away harmful ones? All this is the work of the agent of worship, who alone is proficient. Also, throughout the time during which the young warriors are under his supervision, he has complete control over them, and this power he will indeed want to keep. But with their return to the village, the youths, now warriors, fall back under the authority of the tribal chief. But this is no obstacle. The practitioner easily recruits neophytes from among those who have been most devoted to him, and with these he forms a society more closed than the previous one and which is, above all, permanent, because of its objective and the manner of its establishment. The tribal chief will have to bow to and obey this group whose control has inevitably escaped him. He almost always agrees to enter it himself, mistakenly hoping therein to recapture his partially lost authority. . . .

515 Such, reduced to the simplest terms, is the origin of the secret society. It has gradually become legal and, in the natural course of things,one of the tribe's most lively organizations. Obviously, it has been greatly modified through time and as a result of changing forms. It has nevertheless remained just as it was in its general structure.

In imitation of the tribe, clan, and family, from which it has been copied, the secret society also has totems: totems of society, of subdivisions, [436] of chiefs, and of individuals. Having taken over the tribal chief's role, the practitioner has replaced him in everything that has to do with these particular totems. Yet it must be observed that since the principal power of these totems lies in secrecy, they will not encroach upon the tribe nor fight against either tribal or other totems. A person entering a secret society is simply seeking additional strength and power or a further guarantee of personal security.

Not only do individuals have totems, but just as the tribe is subdivided into clans and families, so the secret society is divided into classes, each of which has its totem.

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

575 769 We are dealing here with a recognized though secret cult, an accepted cult, addressed to spirits and -- of especial importance -- to the spirits of ancestors. On this subject the practitioner is entirely in agreement with the chief and the tribal traditions.

154 515 But in addition to natural magic to which the practitioners are confined, so to speak, "there is another," says Mgr. Le Roy, (1) [437] "which claims to borrow its power and methods from beings of the invisible world, from the disembodied ancestral spirits of men and even of animals, from independent spirits . . . .

"This anti-Religion has, like Religion, its worship, incantations, evocations, rites, fetishes, offerings, sacrifices, ministers, feast days, places of assembly."

First of all, it has its ministers, who are none other than the sorcerers. For this reason in the preceding pages [cf. Chap. 12--Translator] I have already tried to give a sketch of the sorcerer and to make a clear distinction between him and the practitioner by, describing the main traits of his personality, by sorting out a complicated whole in which many points meet and many lines cross and interpenetrate.

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

Leaving out everything not directly bearing on the subject under discussion, let us examine only the following points, which will show both the great similarities and considerable differences that, from the totemic point of view, exist between these two orders of phenomena.

1. Like the practitioners . . . [438] sorcerers have united in secret societies for the purpose of assuring their vitality and power.

2. The feast days and initiation ceremonies have numerous points of resemblance. However, those of the sorcerers' cult exhibit a much more marked character of horror, cruelty, and especially an extreme immorality, and a hideous obscenity, dominated by a perverted cult of blood descent and procreation.

---

1. La Religion des Primitifs [The Religion of Primitive Peoples], p. 340, "La Magie [Magic]."

515 791 754 3. The practitioners' secret societies all have their own totems. Each group has a guardian totem which carries out for them the role of the étotore or the mvame of tribe, clan, or phratry. Yet, while tribal, clan, or phratry mvame may belong to any of the three kingdoms, animal, vegetable, or mineral, or even occasionally to the sidereal or the spiritual world, the secret society's totem is always an animal, a real animal, sometimes a reptile or fish, often a bird.

Sorcerers' secret societies, however -- and this constitutes an essential difference -- never have this kind of totem. Their mvame or guardian is always a spirit, a being that belongs to the spiritual or disembodied world. That spirit may, and often does, manifest itself (we are speaking from the native's point of view) in animal form, though it will not be a true animal, a fact about which sorcerers unanimously agree. The "spirit" manifests itself, they all will say.

4. Every "practititioner" on the day of his initiation and admission into the secret society, receives a particular, individual totem, usually an animal or a bird. But no physical link connects them; as with the personal mvame received at birth, there is simply a spiritual, mystical kinship between the two.

515 754 825 Every "sorcerer," on the day of his initiation and admission into the secret society, also forms an alliance with an animal, but that union has quite a special character. There is a real, physical kinship acquired by an exchange of blood, and a real alliance so that from that day onward the animal obeys the man and the man the animal: their lives are bound together. [439]

Strictly speaking, that animal is therefore not really a totem in the sence I have defined. The natives give it a special name: the élâṅéla. European writers, ethnographers, and others, have referred to it as a nagual, and all the phenomena connected with the nagual is called nagualism. It has almost always been confused with the individual totem; nothing could be more unsuitable or actually more untrue.

[Two paragraphs and tables omitted on pp. 439-450. --Translator] [451]

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

575 754 1. Sorcerers, following the example of practitioners, have and still do set up secret societies:

a) throughout the entire Fan tribe;
b) in neighboring Bantu tribes.

I might here point out that I have never come across such associations among other African peoples, such as the Pygmies.

2. These secret societies meet at night in very mysterious fashion.

[786] 3. They are always essentially licentious to such a degree that, according to many writers, unbridled obscenity is the main objective. In my opinion, it is primarily an accompanying circumstance, aimed at controlling and binding the initiates by means of highly erotic and degrading pleasures.

However -- and this is my final point here -- there is one fact which has many a time misled the most conscientious observers, the most eager to learn the truth, and which, combined with the rule of secrecy, curiously complicates the problem. Just as practitioners have ranks and a hierarchy in their secret societies, so sorcerers have instituted ranks and a highly organized hierarchy. Hence there are several kinds of gatherings. Sometimes there is a sort of general assembly for all who belong to the association, in which case the purpose is a celebration, almost always of revolting obscenity and cruelty. All the witnesses clearly agree on this point.

But beside these "general" celebrations for the whole membership, there are others of a much more secret character to which only sorcerers, the true and sole leaders of these assemblies, are invited. Notified by a password to which I shall shortly refer, they gather at the appointed place and there [452] a very particular kind of feast takes place about which it is difficult to give precise details. It can well be imagined that those who belong to these associations keep silent. The rule of secrecy is absolute and inexorable; moreover, their own interest is at stake. It will always be very hard, if not impossible, to throw light on many facts and factors whose disclosure would nevertheless be extremely valuable from the religious point of view.

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

754 575 828 Sorcerers meet on certain days at a specified place. In most cases this meeting has been decided upon in advance at the previous gathering. But it may also happen that the high chief wants to convene his followers unexpectedly. How then is this done?

The manner is most mysterious.

A chief whom I once questioned on this subject told me that he heard the call during his sleep, that a "voice" informed him of the day, hour, and spot, and that this happened quite often. What is to be made of this reply? I must admit that I do not know. It can be stated definitely that certain sorcerers [453] are very clever at thought transmission even over long distances; such difficulties do not bother them.

One day I observed the following: I was chatting freely in a hut with a Fan who considered himself a friend of ours and who did, in fact, do us many services. I was sitting on his bamboo bed and he on a stool facing me. Suddenly I noticed a little bundle of sticks, some painted red, the others white, a few pointed, the rest not. What was most astonishing was that it seemed to me that the fairly large bundle had not been there a moment before. I hastily called it to our friend's attention because he could not have seen it, having his back turned. . . .

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

"It's nothing, don't pay any attention," he said. He picked up the bundle and hid it carefully, adding, "Above all, don't mention it to anyone -- you would do me a great deal of harm!"

As his reply did not satisfy me, I wanted a further explanation.

"No, no!" he kept repeating, "It's a deep secret (endzâṅdzâṅ éki, lit., the forbidden mystery)."

754 575 828 203 At last after much urging, he decided to admit, after making me promise never to say anything to anyone, that he was a sorcerer of the Ngil rite and that this was the way of convening the next meeting.

"According to the color painted on the sticks," he said, "I know where I'm to go; the number of sticks tells me how many days until my departure for the meeting; the white ones indicate

754 the leaders who will be there, as each has his private mark.
575 That's all."

828 "But why are some pointed and others not?"

203 "Oh, that! No, that's a deep secret. If I were to tell you that I'd be punished by death at the next meeting."

[Pages 454-462 omitted. --Translator] [463]

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

791 All practitioners' societies recognize ritual sacrifice. In
many cases a human victim is slain and eaten. These sacrifices
754 are often characterized by what seems to us revolting cruelty and
575 horror. I shall have occasion to deal with this point more fully
782 when discussing sacrifice.

266 These are ritual sacrifices: immolation is not done for the pleasure of killing any more than consuming the victim is for the pleasure of eating human flesh. This is so much the case that a
woman is never sacrificed: "*Munga ké dzamadzam, ké kie ve
[562 nsissim*: A woman is of no importance (from the sacrificial point
174] of view)," runs a Fan proverb, "She has no power over spirits
because she has no soul."

At sorcerer's feasts, on the contrary, and in the societies they organize, men are eaten for the pleasure of eating human flesh.

754 According to all the Fan and all Africans, sorcerers leave their boeies in order to go and feed on the hearts of other men while asleep. Hence their name, *béndzi bur*, eaters of men. Sometimes they do this themselves, sometimes it is done by a spirit that possesses them. I willingly admit, of course, that there is nothing true in these accusations, at least as regards the way in which the sorcerers work. But one thing is undeniable, the fact of cannibalism.

[One paragraph omitted; p. 464 omitted. --Editor]

Chapter XIV

Totems of Sorcerers and of their Secret Societies

The Nagual and Nagualism

[Summary omitted.--Translator] [466]

154 The foregoing pages have shown the close connections and also the great differences between practitioners and sorcerers. The connections arise from what is often identity of person; the differences are due to entirely unlike and often contrary purposes.

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

... A major cause of confusion ... derives, it seems to me, from the various totems that can belong to the same sorcerer, for several different reasons. Furthermore, the transformation of a sorcerer into an animal, often attributed to him, rightly or wrongly, plays a large part.

Hence the following points may be usefully made:

The different totems of any sorcerer belong to three distinct categories corresponding to:

1. his being a member of a tribe;
2. his ability to be a practitioner at the same time as a sorcerer;
3. his being a real sorcerer.

1. In belonging to a tribe, like any warrior each sorcerer has the following totems: a) tribal, b) clan, c) phratry, d) family, e) individual.

I have dealt with these different totems and pointed out that they can be, and often are, embodied in one and the same totem. [467]

2. From his ability to be a practitioner, a sorcerer possesses two totems: an individual totem and a class totem.

There is nothing to prevent these totems from being similar, or even the same as, the totems of the first category. In such a case they reinforce one another; power is thereby increased and, though the totemic prohibitions may be more strict, their observance is also easier. In fact, practitioners often give the clan or family totem as individual totems to novices provided that it be an "animal" totem. The class totem, already in existence, is thus independent of the particular will of the "admitting" practitioner or initiator, as well as of the "candidate."

3. As a sorcerer:

a) The sorcerer has no individual totem but a "dedicated animal." I shall indicate the great differences between "totem" and "dedicated animal."

154 b) Imitating the classes of practitioners, the classes of initiates controlled by sorcerers have class totems. These classes are recruited each within his own tribe.

154 515 c) The societies composed only of sorcerers are recruited from many different tribes, as the need arises, whatever may be the political relations, hostile or not. The societies embrace the whole nation. A sorcerer is always allied to every other sorcerer, at least from the point of view of organization, for often their struggle for influence is implacable.

These sorcerer's societies do not have totems but obey a spirit.

154 825 I have already mentioned the various changes of form assumed by sorcerers, and I shall return to this briefly in order to show that the different forms must not be confused, as has often been done, with the nagual, or sorcerer's "dedicated animal."

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

[Page 468 and three paragraphs on p. 469 omitted. --Translator] [469]

Having eliminated all totems that do not belong to the sorcerer as such, the following points confront us:

1. At first glance each sorcerer appears to have his totem -- animal, bird, reptile -- to which he pays particular tribute. [470]

The majority of writers apply the word nagual, nyarong, etc., to this familiar animal, and the group of facts connected with the nagual is naturally called nagualism. Now these writers see in the nagual, nyarong, etc., and in nagualism nothing but a special form of totem and totemism. Is this opinion justified -- is the nagual a totem?

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [471] [Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

The nagual, according to Van Gennep, following Lang, is the local name of the individual totem.

As regards the Fan I should not agree, and all the investigations we have been able to make among neighboring tribes as well as in Madagascar (to whom Van Gennep refers) bear out this opinion. The nagual is not the local name of the individual totem but of "an" individual totem, or better still -- for I do not

757
825
admit to there being a "totem" involved -- of an animal "dedicated" to certain persons, few in number, who, in the case in point, are the sorcerers. I therefore make the following proposals:

1. The nagual is not the local name of the individual totem but the local name of the animal guardian of "certain" individuals -- two different conceptions corresponding to different purposes. And I write, not "totem," but -- which is not the same -- "animal guardian." . . . [472]

2. Nagual and nagualism closely "approximate" totem and totemism in the sense that in both there is an animal guardian and a group of facts connected with this guardian, but they are differentiated completely in the sense that:

a) The totem in its basic form, that is, as a family or tribal totem, is not alive at the present time, but had lived formerly and handed down its attributes and especially the efficacy of its alliance to all its descendants, but actually only to its descendants now alive.

The nagual, on the other hand, has no existence as a family or tribal nagual. The nagual that would seem to be the protector of a group (like a secret society) is the protector of "the chief" of the group and not the whole group.

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

b) Since the nagual constitutes a unit not a group, it could not be a totem, and therefore nagualism is entirely different from totemism.

Finally, in line with what has been said, individual totems cannot disappear: the actual death of such or such panther [473] may or may not affect tribe, clan, family, or individual, of which it is, not the but a totem. But the death of that panther will in no way be the death of the totem, since the panther totem is a group just as much for the tribe as for the individual.

On the other hand, the death of such or such panther, the nagual of a certain sorcerer, will profoundly affect him, because, not a collective group, but an individual unit is concerned. A dead nagual can never be replaced. It is bad luck for the sorcerer, who loses by the death of his dedicated animal the most active agent of his authority and power. His own life is often linked with

754 that of his nagual and vice versa. If he is ill or if he dies, his
575 nagual suffers or dies; if the nagual dies or suffers, so the man
dies or suffers.

[Pp. 474-480 omitted. --Translator] [481]

Initiation of the Practitioner

575 The practitioner at the time of his initiation undergoes a
791 different kind of test from that which young [ordinarily] men do. These tests are distinguished by a more marked degree of cruelty and especially by the offering of a victim. The victim will first be dedicated in special rites. After the tests and when the neophyte has been judged fit to enter the priestly company, then only is the totem chosen. But the choice is not left to the candidate; the "admitting" practitioner gives it to him. He must first of all undergo a severe fast of at least seven days. During this time he is forbidden absolutely, under any pretext, to leave his hut, which is set apart in a portion of the forest reserved to practitioners and called ēli bḗngan. No person is allowed to approach. Any intercourse with women, even a mere glance,
[362
688] would bring about permanent exclusion. Moreover, the woman would be put to death, and her father or husband would have no right to compensation, pecuniary or other.

During the neophyte's seclusion his "admitting" [practitioner] has chosen the totem; avoiding many complications, he almost always chooses the class totem to which the confraternity is already dedicated.

What kind of totems are they? They never belong to the mineral realm, nor are they ever celestial phenomena, nor spirits of any sort, materialized or not, as happens with clan or tribal totems.

575 The class totem is usually a bird [or] a swiftly moving
791 animal, rarely a fierce one when the choice would be made be-
825 cause of the animal's positive qualities and not for its power to harm. Indeed the secret society prefers to seek as protecting totems, those that will guarantee swift and sure retreat in case

515 of danger. Hence the symbolic choice of fast birds: the river
791 swallow, the koulyèbe that flies like an arrow, the eagle or the
825 vulture whose powerful flight protects it from enemies, the turtledove or the wood pigeon that knows how to conceal a nest so as to escape all attention. Or it might be an antelope with nimble legs and acute hearing, [482] which is especially difficult to capture. Finally, the crocodile sometimes appears as a totem not because it is bad tempered and devours men, but because it is always on the watch and at the slightest disturbance submerges itself and disappears in the river or because its scaly covering makes it invulnerable to arrows and javelins.

Such are the qualities that a secret society demands for itself.

515 The "consecrator" has chosen the totem, generally that of
791 a class. He must now procure one himself but catch it "alive."
782 He brings it into the hut of the "consecrated" one, who keeps it, at least as much as possible, on his chest throughout a whole night. In the morning the totem is led with great ceremony to the middle of a clearing and sprinkled with lustral water: the attending practitioners dance around it, then sing the hymn to the totem; the candidate sings it along with them. This hymn extols the totem's strength, valor, and swiftness, and especially thanks it for the protection given the society. Then, after this hymn, the candidate fetches the victim, whom he must offer, and leads him
[567 before the totem. Ordinarily, the victim is a foreign slave, be-
562] cause he should not belong to the Fan nation, in order to avoid any possible ritual offense. (1) It is, however, permissible -- and this often happens -- to take a Fan woman. The slave or
[278] woman is tightly gagged. Usually no resistance is offered, especially since the victim is given alèwanè to drink the evening before, a decoction of herbs and woody mushrooms that have the property of suppressing memory. The neophyte forces the victim to walk in front of him, or pushes him, going around the totem

1. A foreign slave or a woman is chosen because neither possesses a totem and therefore no ritual offense is to be feared.

575 three times. He then pulls him down to the ground, binds him
791 in front of the totem, and with one stroke of the mfor cuts the
782 carotid arteries. The blood is collected in a clay pot, which is carefully broken after the ceremony and buried. When the blood has stopped flowing, the practitioners approach. The leader, the others next, and the neophyte last, dip their hands into the pot and sprinkle the totem while they dance around it. [483]

Right after this the head practitioner approaches the totem
575 and smears its neck with the victim's blood, then with one stroke
791 cuts its arteries. The spouting blood is collected with care be-
782 cause no drop must fall on the ground, to avoid any profanation.
266 The victim's blood is mixed with the totem's, and everyone dips his hand into the pot and stirs; when the contents have been thoroughly mixed, the pot is put on a fire that has been prepared and, as soon as the blood starts to coagulate, each person present approaches and drinks a bit. The neophyte takes his turn last and has to drink all that is left no matter how much.

The victim and the totem are then placed on a special pyre. Often the victim's body is opened and the heart removed and the totem's body put in its place. When the fire has pretty well roasted both bodies, they are taken off and the victim's is put aside for eating. The totem is put back on the fire and entirely consumed, except that its burnt and pulverized bones are preserved. The victim's bones are also kept and reduced to ash so that they may be mingled with the totem's. These ashes are eventually divided among all those present; the larger share go-
[789] ing to the new practitioner to form his "totemic" fetish, which he will make use of whenever he appeals to his totem. In particular, when he takes part in the "consecration" of a new practitioner, he will, after the immolation of the totem as just described, put a pinch of these ashes on the totem's body: all his colleagues will do the same, in order to mystically unite all the totems in a common sacrifice.

At the end of the ceremony, the new practitioner must get rid of all signs of it before he returns to the village. He must see to it that no drop of blood, no trace of ash, be profaned. He breaks up the pyre, buries the pot for blood at a distance, and goes home only then, invested with a new dignity.

515 791 —688 The ceremony is altogether secret in the sense that no layman may be present, but it remains a legal ceremony, and [484] everyone in the village -- if only through having had to stay away -- knows where and when it takes place. However, it must not be mentioned by anyone. Anyone doing so would have to pay a fine, usually of a fowl or its equivalent in value.

Thus the totem initiation of practitioner belongs to the ordinary scheme of things.

That of the sorcerer is quite different.

Initiation of the Sorcerer; the *Nagual*

154 515 In a book (1) published several years ago, the author, Mgr. Buléon ... gives an eyewitness account of the sorcerer's initiation. ...

[Footnote omitted. --Translator]

"To be initiated as a sorcerer means being initiated by secret ceremonies into certain rites through which one may gain some signal favor from a spirit whose power one recognizes. ...

"Motivated by revenge, avarice, or ambition, an African one day leaves his village, to which he only expects to return when armed with the mysterious and terrible power that will allow him to satisfy his desires. His journey's end may be distant; often he has excellent reasons for seeking, far away and usually outside his tribe, someone who will confer marvelous privileges upon him. His absence sometimes lasts [485] several months. ...

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

"The candidate is seated on the ground, wearing only a loincloth and tattooed more than the others. Undermined by severe privations made more hazardous by being uninterrupted,

---

1. *Sous le Ciel d'Afrique, Recits d'un Missionaire* [Under the African Sky], A Missionary's Account], by the Rev. Father Buléon, Congregation of the Holy Ghost, pp. 88 ff.

515 754 subjected to skillfully graduated demands, participating in ceremonies that arouse his imagination while exhausting him by their length, he gradually grows weaker and feels overwhelmed by the somber and mysterious aspect of initiation and falls into a kind of hallucination.

"In the depths of the hut [where the initiation takes place], there is a crudely sculptured image. Beneath that has been put a bundle containing the bones of a man long dead, and in front a mirror has been hung with its face towards the spectators. In all initiation proceedings the candidate is brought before the mirror and asked: 'What do you see?' For a long time he has to reply: 'I don't see anything.' As long as the reply is negative the initiation has not been successful. But finally the expected sign appears; he sees the likeness of a man in the mirror. Then he is led aside and made to describe the man whose face he has just seen. He had never seen him before [486] and cannot have known him, yet he describes him with great precision, giving all the facial traits. No cheating is possible in this. From the description given, the initiator, who is able to judge the likeness, identifies the man whose bones are beneath the image. This proof allows him to decide that the initiation is proceeding on the right track.

"Sometimes the initiator demands more personal and more active cooperation from the person seeking initiation. ... he may require that he bring the skull and a few bones of a relative of the first degree. ...

"Only when he brings in the material proofs of his crime are the final rites carried out. The bones are thrown into a [266] cauldron with herbs and other ingredients that are unsavoury. When the horrible mixture has been sufficiently cooked, the unfortunate man is made to drink a cup while the audience sings. Then what is left in the pot is divided, and everyone has a share. [789] The small bones are wrapped in old rags, and this bundle is given to the initiate: it constitutes his talisman, which he will wear and which will protect him from the dangers he fears and obtain for him the favors he desires.

575
754
825 "There would seem to be nothing further except to pay the initiator and to carry away the treasure so dearly and criminally bought. But there is still a final ceremony. Initiator and initiate both are actors and witnesses in a strange scene which I should not describe were it not as authentic as it is apparently unbelievable. The new initiate's life is to be united through a bloody rite to that of an animal, who will thereafter be his personal animal, not a domestic or tame animal, but a wild beast living in the depths of the forest or the bed of a river. The initiator has made the necessary arrangements; he gives a signal: [487] at first no sound is heard in reply but soon in the bright moonlight an unknown participant is seen approaching the spot in the forest where it is awaited -- sometimes an enormous mass with a monstrous head, sometimes a feline form that crawls rather than walks, sometimes a long body that unwinds and undulates. Whatever the animal -- hippopotamus, panther, or snake -- it forgets the timidity or ferocity felt in the presence of man and submits docilely to the desired operation. Then the exchange of blood takes place. How this is done is not our concern. But what is beyond any doubt is the fact that blood is let, of the animal and of the initiate, and that each is inoculated with the other's blood. The animal's ear is slit (a corresponding cut is made upon a snake) as a mark [304] of the link established with the man, in whose arm an incision is made so that he in turn is marked with the sign of the beast. (1)

1. [The footnote, referring to mediaeval witchcraft practices, is omitted. --Translator]

A real link henceforth exists between them. The animal will be at the beck and call of the person who has been made his master. I could name ... a certain Black man who at night receives a vulture or a panther with slit ear, and another who allows into his hut and even his bed (ikoko) a python that recognizes his authority. When day comes, and the tasks have been

575 754 825 performed, the animals return to lake or bush, just as dangerous, often more so, to all whose blood they have not received.

"This union is so close between animal and man that the life of one depends upon that of the other.

"How many examples I could give! Should you kill a panther that bears the mark, you will not long afterwards learn of the death of some sorcerer. Should the sorcerer be the first to die, don't be surprised at finding near the village the dead body of his personal animal."

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator] [488]

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

In contrast [to the position with regard] to totems, both men and women can have a nagual, since both can be sorcerers. Yet those naguals are not the same for both sexes.

Among the Fan, the naguals that belong to men, with rare exceptions, are:

1. panther, incorrectly called tiger, nze; and by far the most frequent.
2. black snake, elom, sometimes the python, mvom.
3. crocodile, nkôm, rarely the ngâṅ or cayman, never the earth saurians.
4. hippopotamus, ngŭbe or nguve.
5. wild boar, ngŭ.
6. vulture, nkôṅ, but very rarely.

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

The naguals belonging to women are:

1. black snake, kagĕlakagĕla, different from the mvom.
2. vulture, nkôṅ. [489]
3. earth saurians; rarely the crocodile.
4. a kind of owl or night bird, akûṅ.
5. green snake found in banana trees, fôl.
6. a kind of horned viper, fî.

[Nine paragraphs omitted on p. 489. --Translator] [Page 490 omitted. --Translator] [491]

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

The ĕlâṅĕla, may quite well also belong to the animal clan to which individual, clan, or tribal totems are related, and this

575 754 825 can lead to much confusion. Sorcerers are people particularly eager to conceal themselves and at the same time to assert their power, and they are often clever at doing so. They succeed in disguising the real nature of their nagual: "It's my totem," they will say, if someone surprises them with their ɛlânɛla. To be able to make their supposed totems appear at will often gives them special authority, which they can make good use of in certain circumstances. Indeed, one can imagine the prestige gained by a sorcerer who during a ritual ceremony thus calls on his totem, in reality his nagual. But ordinarily he restrains himself, for he would then unmask his sorcerer's character, and, unless he is all-powerful and protected from revenge, that is not at all what he has in mind. . . .

[614] According to certain chiefs, especially among the Bɛkwɛ, the totem of the founder of the race or clan was originally his ɛlânɛla. This is perfectly admissible. If by one or another means the founder of tribe or clan was able to bind an animal to his will, to make it obedient, or at least to persuade his followers that this was so -- which amounts to the same thing -- these men may very readily, after his death, choose his ɛlanɛla for their totem. But this choice, which is determined by circumstances or the wish of the dying chief, does not imply that it remains an ɛlânɛla. On the contrary, this characteristic [492] disappeared by the very fact of its becoming a totem and ceasing to be a unit in order to become a collective group through its descendants.

[Two paragraphs omitted--Translator]

In a certain number of cases it has happened that the nagual is confused with the sorcerer himself. In fact, according to the Africans, sorcerers often transform themselves into animals. . . .

[Three paragraphs omitted.--Translator] [493]

[Three paragraphs omitted.--Translator]

Almost always, I am convinced, these [phenomena] may be attributed to men being disguised as animals, either to safely satisfy their murderous impulses or to obtain victims for feasts of human flesh.

In some cases these men act under the mysterious influence of unknown agents. This perhaps involves a kind of unconscious

675 possession. They believe and declare themselves to be really
754 transformed into animals. ...

825 Finally, when it is not a question of the [sorcerer] in disguise (which is nearly always the case), one often deals with his *nagual*, obedient to his instructions and prompting, at least in the beginning. After the animal has tasted human flesh [494] it is eager to return of its own accord. I remember that in a village in the interior, a panther had devoured 37 persons within a year. A sorcerer was accused of having the animal under his command and, as a result, after confession he was killed. The next day the panther was found dead in the forest. A coincidence? Perhaps the sorcerer had made use of the panther the first time, but in connection with the other killings, I have my doubts. In any case, this panther had an ear slit by human hand, as I was able to verify. Without passing judgement on the outcome, this was an obvious sign that it was "dedicated."

In their main outlines, the sorcerers' confraternities [sic] are modeled on those of practitioners. Both, therefore, possess two distinct categories of confraternity, or secret society, one set composed of initiates directed and controlled by practitioners and sorcerers, the other composed solely of practitioners or sorcerers.

1. Societies composed of initiates directed by sorcerers each has its totem, as do the similar societies directed by practitioners. This totem is always an animal -- a custom found almost universally and made necessary by the very concept of the totem.

575 2. Secret societies composed solely of sorcerers do not have
754 totems; they obey a spirit.

776 [Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [495]

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

This spirit bears the name, *engungure*. It is also the name of the *khun*, or ghosts, or even of the souls of the dead after the postmortuary exercises and the final transformations.

Chapter XV

The Totem in Fan Life: General Rites

000 Summary: Religion gives form to Fan life.

1. Totemic claim to worshipping rites. Sir Harry Johnston's view.
   The totem's rights as mvamayôń, eponymous father
   This cult derived from that of the esayôń, real father and founder of the race.
2. General totemic rites, or rites of the mvamayôń.
   Common factor in all totemic rites of worship.
   1) Totemic sacrifice. Views of Smith, Hubert, and Mauss. a) Sacrifice of* the totem: In principle the totem may not be killed. When is sacrifice allowed? How is the sacrifice made? What constitutes sacrifice? Immolation and exchange of blood, communion through the victim. b) Sacrifice to the totem. The various sacrifices.
   2) Lustral water: its qualities. How to consecrate it. Its totemic uses.
   3) Fasting: practices. Duration. Reason for fasting.
   4) Totemic dances. Religious dances, for circumcision, funerary, totemic. Their common characteristic of decency.
   Rhythm.
3. General totemic rites: details.
   1) Circumcision. a) Is it a religious rite? Circumcision not to be attributed essentially to hygienic causes. View of Renan. Medical views. b) Is circumcision a totemic rite? Frazer, Father Lagrange, Abbé Bros. Relevance for the Fan.

   c) The circumcision itself. Fan view of it. (1) Event and name. 2) Age of circumcision. 3) Time of the ceremony. 4) Preparations. 5) The ceremony.

---

* [Obvious misprint here: au for du. --Translator]

000 d) Consequences of circumcision. Mgr. Le Roy's opinion of circumcision. The writer's view. [497]
2) Initiation of the young man. Tests before admission to warrior rank. Consecration and song connected with the rifle, the hymn to the sun.
3) Consecration of the chief. a) The ceremony. The consecration song. Sacrifice and victim. b) Rite of the spear among Marundi and Fan. Purpose of these ceremonies. c) Rites of initiation and consecration of the chief compared with the religious role of the Pharaoh. d) Mistakes made by European administration in appointing chiefs outside the main lineage.
e) Change of the clan totem. Examples.
4) War and palavers. War sacrifice and the victim. The ceremony. The sacrificer. Communion through the victim.
5) Large hunting expeditions. Sacrifice; the motive.
6) Founding a new village. Reasons. Preparatory rites.
Establishment.
7) Ordeals. Various kinds. Occasions for ordeals. Fire and boiling water tests. The poison test.
8) Blood exchange. How it is practiced among the Fan and among various African tribes.

[Beginning of Text]

771 The whole of the Fan's life, like that of every African, whether Bantu or other, is deeply imbued with religion.

Sometimes it gives form to and determines the principal actions of family and social life, sometimes it constitutes their very essence and raison d'être. It is then, strictly speaking, religious life.

These acts of worship are performed by special ministers, by the father of the family in the case of family rites, by the clan or tribal chief for public phenomena, and by the practitioner

771 or true minister for religious life. Often, however, the practitioner actually, though not lawfully, replaces the father and especially the clan or racial chief. Alongside the practitioner, struggling against him in the background, appears the sorcerer, the agent of the extra- or contra-legal cult.

The religious act is addressed to spirits, to souls of the departed, to ancestors, to unknown forces of nature, etc. It is also addressed to the totem, as we have defined it. The totem is connected with religion by close ties which, at least for the Fan, link it inseparably with ancestor worship and determine the worshipping rites that are its due. [498]

1. Totemic Claim to Worshipping Rites

779 The claims of the true totem to worshipping rites is clearly defined by virtue of its being the father of the tribe and founder of the race.

In using these two words, "father" and "founder," as I have pointed out before, I in no way mean that the eponymous animal is the real father of the face, the actual progenitive founder. I am using these words as the natives do, so as to adopt their own terms. Frequently, they have been misunderstood. (1)

1. Cf. S. Reinach, Orpheus (under the word "totem"), p. 20 and passim.

Real kinship has often been confused with kinship based on sentiment, mode of speech, or custom. Moreover, some writers have been in doubt, even with firsthand evidence:

"I have never been able to ascertain from Banyoro or Baganda that their forefathers at any time believed the clan to be descended from the object chosen as a totem. The matter remains very obscure. It may be remotely connected with ancestor-worship, which is certainly the foundation of such religious beliefs as are held by the Banyoro, as by most other Negro races." (2)

2. Sir H. Johnston, The Uganda Protectorate, Preface.

779 As may be seen from these remarks of Sir Harry Johnston, the resemblance between *mvamayôn* and *esayôn* was more the consequence of a writer's preconceived idea or of a native's misinterpreted statement than of the words themselves and the crux of the matter.

What, then, are the totem's rights, according to this view of kinship; are they real in the exact sense of the word or simply the result of blood exchange?

As father of the tribe, *mvamayôn*, and founder of the race, the totem has a claim to a cult, and, consequently, to special rites, determining the circumstances, place, and manner of worship.

But the *mvamayôn* may and should be considered from two points of view: it is the protector of clan and tribe, and thereby, strictly speaking, the *mvamayôn*; it consequently has a right to public worship, national or tribal. But it is also the protector of the family [499] and the individual, and thereby, the *étotore*; it consequently has a claim to family and individual worship. In order to apprehend and understand the significance of many totemic phenomena, it is absolutely necessary to make this distinction.

The *mvamayôn* therefore ought to receive ritual worship, and not just any kind; this presupposes the intervention of a practitioner representing the chief, or the head of the family or even the tribal chief. And not only does the *mvamayôn* have a right to collective public worship in special circumstances laid down by law, such as the establishment of a new village, but further, as *étotore*, to private, individual worship, which requires the intervention of a private person and a head of a family, not of a practitioner or tribal chief.

779
771 But, let me emphasize that this totemic worship, whether private and individual or tribal and general, does not in certain respects fit into the wider framework of religious life *per se*, or, if one prefers, does not constitute the religion of the nation or tribe. Indeed the practitioner is the rightful representative, guardian, and recognized sacrificial ministrant of religion, not by choice but by his function itself.

779 In totemic worship, on the other hand, which is not re-
771 ligion but a collection of religious phenomena, this role belongs to the family or tribal head and if, in an exceptional case, it is performed by the practitioner, he does so as a delegate only.

The cult of the mvamayôṅ is in fact a derived cult, pri-
779 marily based upon the esayôṅ cult without which it would have no
769 raison d'être. Indeed, the esayôṅ is the true father of the tribe and without the esayôṅ there could be no mvamayôṅ; one evidently cannot exist without the other. But the esayôṅ, or ancestral worship, is independent of what is strictly a religious cult or recognition of the divine being and worship of spirits. The esayôṅ cult is connected with religion per se in the sense of drawing upon it as a source and, according to the Fan, of deriving from it its ultimate origin and fundamental rationale. The esayôṅ cult is therefore primarily and in principle a family cult, if one takes each tribal ancestor separately. It is national if the first ancestor or ancestors of the tribe are viewed together. The cult, then, is definitely connected with the genuine religious cult of deities, [500] in the sense that in many Bantu tribes, and probably among the Fan, the first ancestor or ancestors of the tribe are now deified and raised to the rank of national gods, or at least, spiritual protectors of the tribe.

779 Totemism therefore has only relative importance as a basis
[771] for Fan religious conceptions and takes, one might say, only third place, after the leading cult of spirits and then after ancestor worship, of which it is but a derivative.

Totemic rites will, as I have said, be general or particular according to whether they are connected with the mvamayôṅ or the étotore. The first rites relate to the race itself and what bears upon its continuance and preservation, the others relate to the individual, not as a particular person but as a member of the race. From this we come quite naturally to recognizing among them those of the family and those of society, with religion entering to a greater or lesser extent into the second.

119

2. General Totemic Rites, or Rites of the mvamayôṅ

To list and then discuss all the general rites connected directly or indirectly with Fan totemism, and those in which traces of totemism might be discovered or questioned, would carry us far beyond the necessary limits set for this study. Moreover, I shall take up later, in a work on Fan religion, those rites that are more closely connected with religious phenomena and that could not be separated without some previous explanation of the latter.

Among general totemic rites, I shall refer briefly to those that primarily concern the continuation and preservation of the race. These are:

1. Circumcision, by which a person is received into tribal life
2. Initiation, which places him among the warriors
3. Consecration of the chief, which links the tribe with its ancestors [501]
4. Warfare, which preserves the tribe
5. Hunting and fishing expeditions, which provide subsistence
6. Establishment of a new village, which is a part of the tribe's social life
7. Ordeals and the poison test, which eliminate and punish rebellion against the tribe
8. Exchange of blood, which admits a stranger into the tribe and enlarges the family or links two tribes in common alliance through the chiefs who personify them

In all general totemic rites, and often in particular ones, there are several elements to which we should first pay attention so as to avoid repetition. These are:

1. Sacrifice, which appears to be basic to all rites, general and particular
2. Fasting, which takes place before major sacrifices
3. Lustral water, which is associated with almost every sacrifice
4. Totemic dances, which are an integral part of the rites

119 Of these, sacrifice is by far the most important. It is required; without it, in one form or another, there would be no rite, no cult ceremony.

I. Totemic Sacrifice

119
182 Sacrifice is the basis of all totemism. Totemic activities, whatever they may be, depend upon sacrifice, as do all the religious activities of the African.

At first glance, there appears to be considerable variety in sacrifices. Various authors have attempted to classify them. (1)

> 1. Cf. Hubert and Mauss, Le sacrifice, Mélanges d'histoire des Religions [Sacrifice, Miscellany on the History of Religion] (Paris, 1909), pp. 16 ff., Lagrange, Études sur les Religions sémitiques [Studies in Semitic Religion], pp. 249; Reinach, Cultes, Mythes, Religions [Cults, Myths, Religions] Vol. 1, pp. 2-3 ff.; Bros, op. cit. [Religion des peuples non civilisés (Religion of Noncivilized People)], p. 143; Le Roy, op. cit., [La Religion des Primitifs (The Religion of Primitives), (Paris, 1909), pp. 322 ff. [502]

We shall discuss only two kinds here, without being concerned about distinctions:

1. Sacrifice to the totem
2. Sacrifice of the totem (1)

> 1. W. R. Smith (article on "Sacrifice" in the Encyclopedia Britannica) acknowledges sacrifice as a totemic rite; in his opinion, it is a blood covenant, a communal meal at which the faithful eat their totem god so as to assimilate his

119
182

power, to make or renew their covenant with him. The slaughter has no other purpose except to permit communion. This is not found in all sacrifice, because, through the evolution of ideas, the notion of the "sacred" has acquired such importance that the god is merely a surviving rite, whose origin is inevitably explained by mythology.

In the view of Hubert and Mauss, sacrifice is based on belief in a vague, divine power which one can master by magical sacrifices. The purpose of sacrifice is to establish communication between the sacred world possessing these powers and the profane world, through a victim, that is, an object destroyed in the course of the ceremony. To fulfill this purpose, the victim is consecrated; by means of magic all the divine powers are concentrated in the victim and they are increased by being liberated by the immolation. The religious agent, the person offering the sacrifice, and the faithful are made partakers of this power. The victim's approach must be prepared for, hence the purifying rites.

Father Lagrange's theory acknowledges animism and gods, instead of magical forces.

a) Sacrice of the totem

The totem is "sacred" in itself. Mvame a ne éki. It is forbidden to offend it, even in speech, and that under severe penalties, all the more so to wound and, above all, to kill it. Should this happen, the act always entails punishment and expiation, two completely separate things, to which we shall return when discussing the sacrifice made to the totem.

779 How can these facts be reconciled with the sacrifice of
782 the totem itself?

Sacrifice of a totem animal belongs to a special order of ideas. First of all, observe that we may use the term "animal." In fact, a totem is generally a living being. When this is not the case, the practitioner or religious agent of the sacrifice, the "sacrificing one," has the right to make a substitution, that is, to "animalize in another living being" the totem that is a spirit, a celestial phenomenon or a mineral, etc. [503]

779 "The totem animal is the one with whom, or rather with
782 whose tribe, a man, representing his own person and his
675 descendants, has made a covenant, in order to obtain services in return. This agreement usually (and we have seen that this was always the case among the Fan) "was sealed by an exchange of blood in such a way that animal and man, the family of the one and of the other, the tribe uof the first and the tribe of the second, are individuals, families, or tribes of the same blood. They are allied. From time to time it is a good thing to renew this covenant, and that is done by sacrificing a representative of the animal family, a sacrifice in which man takes part as a communicant: there is a new blood exchange, a revival of the first covenant. In addition, it is a reinforcement of the special virtues of the totem, virtues which are perhaps strengthened by the presence or influence of the ancestral spirit in the animal or vegetable so consecrated, sacrificed, and eaten." (1)

1. Le Roy, op. cit., pp. 324-325.

779 In what circumstances, how and why, will the totem ani-
782 mal be thus sacrificed? For it is probably not enough to say, with the distinguished author just quoted, "From time to time it is a good thing to renew this covenant."

There will be a sacrifice of the totem:

1. Whenever a new totem is to be chosen.

This happens, first, at each "birth" in the most inclusive sense of the word or, again, at each "beginning of a new life." Such would be the establishment of a new clan, at which time the chief's totem becomes the clan totem instead of merely the

779 family one. Likewise, in the case of an individual, there will be sacrifice of the totem after birth, when the child has been
782 accepted by his father and admitted for the first time into the tribe and receives his personal totem. And there will be another sacrifice of the totem upon his initiation as a warrior, his entry into a secret society, at each stage in initiation, in short, upon each change of totem or introduction to a totem.

2. Whenever the tribe, the clan, or the secret society, sometimes the family and even the individual, undergoes a critical experience [504] involving danger to life and needs to call upon totemic aid in a special way. The religious head of the group in danger, after the necessary sacrifices, will have to decide whether or not this offering and new exchange of blood is expedient.

3. In certain cases it may happen that the "materialized" totem has been lost: if, for instance, in battle or any kind of fighting, the *akaméyôñ*, (1) the materialized totem representing the actual covenant of the tribe with its real totem, falls into the enemy's hands. Sometimes the victors may even demand the surrender of the *akaméyôñ*. Or the loss may be casual, the result of accident, shipwreck, etc. In all such cases, the *akale* or materialized totem will have to be replaced, whether it pertains to the nation, clan, family, or individual. The ceremony will vary in elaborateness according to the occasion or the organized group. It will not be very important when a single person is involved, but more so for a clan or tribe, and especially so when there is danger or when the totem has fallen into enemy hands.

Whatever the case may be, the ceremony follows the same broad lines. First of all, there will be an offering or sacrifice to the totem, sometimes a simple gift of fruit, oil, or first fruits, sometimes the sacrifice of an animal, occasionally even the sacrifice of a human being. We have given several

---

1. *Akaleméyôñ* and *akaméyôñ* are both used.

779 examples. After the victim has been offered to the totem,
782 the latter will itself be immolated, with all the prescribed ritual; then comes the eating or partaking of the totem itself. In this way the ancient covenant is renewed, though on a new basis. It means binding the present to the past and making certain in clear and recognizable fashion, the continuance of the totemic agreement concluded by the first ancestor of the race.

The sacrifice of the totem therefore gives us the basic idea which must have guided primitive sacrifice. First of all, it was an "offering," not a "tax" granted to a recognized master, as Le Roy puts it, for totemic sacrifice does not admit of this notion at all, but rather as the expiation of ritual but necessary murder. This notion is confirmed [505] by the fact that the
[682] sacrifice offered "beforehand" to the sacrificed totem is the same as that which ought to be offered as ritual compensation for accidental murder. The totem having been appeased in advance, the "offering" proper is then made. After a series of consecutive consecrations, the "sacrificing person," the chief or practitioner representing the organized group over which he presides, calls "into himself" the genius of the race, the power of the ancestors. But this power rests in, and inhabits, an invisible world, the world of spirits; the actual totem must be carried into that world and put to death in order that it may penetrate it. So, before the ceremony, the "sacrificing person," as representative of that world of spirits, will take care to paint himself with liturgical colors; [with] red, the color of sacrifice, and white, the color of funerals but especially of spirits, deified souls of the dead, ghosts, of all disembodied forces.

Thus totem and victim will be adorned in the same colors, and only then will the "immolation" take place.

After the immolation comes the exchange of blood.

The totem's blood has been carefully collected; those taking part make slight incisions in their arms, squeeze out a little blood, put some on a leaf, take a few drops of the totem's blood and mix it with their own on the leaf. Finally, they apply the leaf to the cuts on their arms and rub energetically so as to make the mixture of bloods penetrate to the depths of the

779 wound. Only after this ceremony do the "participants" renew
782 their covenant by drinking the totem's blood.

"Communion" follows the exchange of blood. This does not always take place; often only the victim that has been offered is shared by everyone, after it is roasted. If the totemic animal is very small, only the future possessor of this totem will receive it as a sacrament. Sometimes, instead of communion based on the totem, the participants only divide the ashes. The totem is burnt to a cinder, but the large bones are preserved intact, pulverized and mixed with the ashes of the previous sacrifice. Then each participant carefully takes [506] the portion due him and keeps it for himself. The sacrificer's portion is always much the largest.

Finally, "substitution" of totems occasionally takes place. It may be that some kinds of totem are very hard to procure, especially in an emergency. This would be the case with a panther, an elephant, or certain rare plants. The procedure, then, is one of substitution, either by simply making a figure in clay or wood, an effigy roughly reproducing the totem, or by making merely a head. But with this image the consecrator will use the same formulae and ritual and will represent symbolically those that cannot actually be performed, like blood exchange. The effigy is always first painted with the symbolic colors, then, after an offering is made, sprinkled with the victim's blood.

b) Sacrifice *to* the totem

These are of various kinds.

German writers often place sacrifices in different categories, such as expiation (*Sühnopfer*), thanksgiving (*Dankopfer*), and petition (*Bittopfer*). This division is more specious than real, at least as far as totemic sacrifice is concerned. Therefore, with Max Müller [Footnote omitted. --Editor], I prefer to look upon them as regular and occasional sacrifices.

Occasional sacrifices I consider, with Mauss [Footnote omitted. --Editor], to be, first, the sacramental sacrifices associated with the solemn events of life, votive sacrifices, and finally curative and expiatory sacrifices.

779 782 Regular or periodic sacrifices are associated with certain fixed occasions, independent of man's will and of chance. These are: the daily sacrifice, that to the new moon, and that of first fruits.

Occasional sacrifices are usually blood offerings, accompanied by rites that have earned the name "communional." [507] In almost all these, there is communion through the victim, and all present partake in the sacrifice.

Periodic totemic sacrifices are, on the other hand, rarely bloody or "communional."

In general, the African considers his own interests first. He usually pays rather little attention to his totem, except for certain rites laid down by custom, from which he would not [788] dare to deviate. Thus, every morning, the first wife or most important woman, in the name of the head of the family, anoints with oil the figure upon the box (évora biéri) that contains both the ancestral skulls and the materialized totem. Also, at the time of the new moon, an offering is made to this same Biéri, to the ancestors and totem together, the two cults being united in a common gift.

But when a Fan has some favor to ask, wants to acquire something, like a wife, an object, etc., he will hasten to make a sacrifice to the totem. The more urgent the need, and the more important the object, the more substantial will be the sacrifice, ranging from a hen to a human victim, sometimes even to the ritual sacrifice of the chief himself or at least of one of his children.

The sacrifice of thanksgiving does not exist for the Fan; he would view it as "give and take" and he would be astonished if asked to give thanks: he has offered a sacrifice to his totem, the latter has granted his prayer, which means that the totem is satisfied. Why do any more? If a new need arises, then only will it be time to have recourse again to his totem. Meanwhile he had best leave things alone. Each is satisfied with the other.

As for expiatory sacrifice, it is one of the most common. Every time an African has an accident, a misfortune, a calamity, perhaps merely lack of success, he attributes it to his totem's

779 having been offended by some nsem or ritual impurity, by the
782 violation of an éki, etc., whence the necessity of appeasing the totem. The greater the misfortune, the more serious must have been the cause or the fault, even though involuntary, and the more to be expiated by a larger sacrifice. [508]

At the basis of all general rites concerned with the race, we find sacrifice in one form or another, either bloody "communional," or bloody and not "communional," or not bloody, or simply as an offering.

In these sacrifices the victim is often the totem itself. But in that case there will always have been a previous offering of another victim. That victim may sometimes be the officiant himself, as in circumcision, when the sacrificer or operator is but an agent.

II. Lustral Water; médzim akum

779 In almost all totemic sacrifices, lustral water is used. The
782 practitioner boils water in a clay pot, making an infusion with
783 various plants. The most commonly used are: ava, a sort of
[824] fragrant labiate; asèp, a strong-smelling mint; esun (hua gabonensis), a tree with a garlicky smell; esèp (monodora myristica), with an equally strong scent; and in addition, the leaves of elun, ombien, and several others. Nearly always eleven plants are used, which must have been picked at the new moon. To these are added a few pieces of meteorite and the remains of a sacrifice offered to the tribal totem, consisting of ashes, bone, and a few bits of horn or hoof, also a little dried blood.

Before beginning, the practitioner or head of the family dips his hands in the lustral water. With this he sprinkles the participants, using a dè, (1) a kind of fly swatter usually made

---

[412] 1. The dè is the insignia of chiefs. In former times, only they were allowed to use an elephant's tail as a fly swatter, when they themselves had killed the animal.

779 from an elephant's tail. He then sprinkles the victim, the
782 ancestral skulls, and finally the totem.

783 Upon returning from battle, warriors wash their weapons in lustral water so as to ward off the malevolent spirits of the dead.

Lustral water is also used in sacrifices made in expiation of violations of *éki*.

Afterwards the water is emptied in a remote spot. The chief often carries it back to the village and uses it to water the [824] tree, usually a fig tree, that was planted over the remains of his umbilical cord. This tree is an emblem of his own life, and the lustral water is in this case a sort of sacrifice. [509]

III. Fasting; *nzè akhu*

779 All important totemic ceremonies are preceded by fasts.
785 They are very strict, and the least infraction entails grave penalties.

They always take place in seclusion: those who are fasting are kept apart in the forest far from the village, shut up in small huts. During the fast it is strictly forbidden to drink or eat before sundown and to wash with water, although rubbing one's body with ashes is allowed. Furthermore, certain meats and fruits are prohibited, such as boiled food or fruit; fermented drinks, except on certain sacred days and before initiations, when, on the contrary, it is obligatory; and drinking from any kind of pot. If someone takes a drink inadvertently, the pot must be broken right away; nevertheless this act involves a ritual fault and requires expiation. One is supposed to drink from a brook, using [834] a leaf rolled into a cone (*oké ésaga*). Finally, throughout the fast all intercourse with women is absolutely prohibited (*évek*).

The duration of the fast varies with the ceremony and the
779 initiation. For circumcision, for instance, it lasts usually a
785 lunar month (*ngon*). Other initiations rarely exceed seven days,
821 let us say a lunar quarter, *aŏóń ngon*; the last quarter is usually chosen (*métè méngon*). The moon plays an important role in all

779 totemic ceremonies, or in even just religious ones. None may
185 be performed while the moon is dark or when it is full (ngon
821 éto ndzuge: the moon is closed). In the ceremonies at which
the chief performs alone, the fast lasts three and a half days, a half lunar quarter; the fast begins at nearly full moon (nsolo ngon) and ends at full moon (nduge ngon).

IV. Totemic Dances: adzém bia dzém akhu

779 Dance plays such a large part in Fan life, as it does in
535 that of every African, that it would be very unlikely to be absent from religious and totemic life. Besides, we know that dancing has always been associated with [510] religious phenomena among all peoples and in all epochs. David danced before the Ark of the Covenant; Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans had their sacred dances; and even in our day, in quite recent times, have we not seen in Madrid the seises, the altar boys of Seville, performing their graceful dances before the blessed sacrament?

The Fan have their religious dances, and special ones for each rite. We may divide them into several classes: purely religious dances, with which we are not concerned; those that accompany totemic rites; and, finally, purely totemic dances.

Among the dances accompanying totemic rites, the principal ones are dances of sacrifice and of circumcision and mortuary dances.

779 As the name indicates, dances of sacrifice accompany all
782 sacrifices and are danced before and after, and each has it
535 characteristic features.

The dance taking place before a sacrifice is serious. The chief, then all the participants, circle slowly around the victim to a tom-tom beating out a solemn rhythm. The movements of this dance are all slow and restrained, knees are bent slightly, elbows pushed back, with hands near the hips. It is more a rhythmic march than a true dance.

The dance taking place after a sacrifice is of quite another character. The rhythm is very fast, arms are raised into the air,

779
762 legs are flung to right and left alternately; two very lively steps,
535 a pause, two successive *jetés* to the right and left, and a swaying of the body above the hips make up this dance, which has real beauty and does not lack a certain style.

779 The circumcision dance is entirely different. The young
881 candidates, painted white from head to foot and dressed in gar-
535 ments of leaves, are led by the initiator before the assembled participants, as soon as the preparatory rites have ended and the
304 operation is to be performed. Grown, circumcised men stand on one side, the ritual experts in the middle, those to be circumcised [511] on the other side. The dance begins. First of all, it consists of an immense circle, which spreads out and turns around the area; then the movement quickens, hands are dropped, and each person leaps and shimmies about on his own, still keeping time, which is marked out by the tom-tom. Moreover, in spite of what appears to be disorder, one soon sees that all movements are regular, perfectly conceived and executed without a hitch, without mistake, without getting out of step. Soon sweat is pouring down the dancers' arms and legs; one after another they go back to their places; only the candidates continue and their dance turns into a spinning in almost one place, on the toes, with hands stretched horizontally. Then, suddenly, at a signal from the tom-tom, the dance stops abruptly: the young dancers rush to their places, sit down, and the operations begin.

Each time the practitioner circumcises a boy, he stands up, holding in his hand proof of the operation, then does a quick dance step consisting of a few merry leaps, to the accompaniment of a special song, which everyone sings together.

When the operations are over, the youths who have been circumcised perform a short dance intended to show their fortitude; it is of just a few steps, done any old way. Then the boys quickly return to their huts, held up by their friends.

764 The funeral dance is much more beautiful. Far from
535 being dignified and solemn, the *fanki* is exceedingly lively and complicated, representing, theoretically, the soul of the dead man leaving his body and later reaching the world of spirits.

764 535 The soul looks everywhere for a new dwelling; it is repulsed on all sides, but at last finds its rightful place. This dance has only a distant connection with totemic performances and so we do not need to be concerned with it.

779 535 Genuinely totemic dances are infrequent and are only performed on important occasions, such as war and above all after a victory. However, they are also part of burial rites and are put on after the *fanki* at the death of a chief. [512]

The totemic dance expresses the link between the head [*chef*] of the race and his totem. It depicts the totem, sometimes in a symbolic, sometimes in a representational, manner. If, as often happens, the totem is an animal, the dance will be really lively; these are the finest examples. In addition, the dancer's talent should go to copying as closely as possible the animal's pace, habits, way of life, in a word, to mime it as accurately as possible.

I have seen some of these totemic dances performed with extraordinary skill. Out of many occasions, there was once one, among the Yemvi, whose totem is a kind of flower called *mvi*: the dancer, moving to a very fast tempo, first outlined the shape of the flower, imitated its appearance by gestures, by an extraordinary swaying of the hips, which involved sometimes bending so far backward that his head would touch the ground without for a second losing the rhythm; from time to time, his arms and head would sweep the ground to the right and the left with incredible swiftness. Then came the blossoming: growth from bud to flower, soon to full bloom. Finally he portrayed the symbolic covenant between the father of the race and the flower, which was brought to him by a spirit. The same dancer presented a really striking contrast between the slow, weighed down, ponderous bearing of the racial chief and the light, elusive, airy, as it were, movements of the spirit approaching, retreating, and approaching again. This entirely symbolic dance has sometimes been quite erroneously interpreted by explorers as being erotic.

When the totem is an animal, the dance is obviously much simpler and more representational. The dancer mimes an animal

779 535 that everyone will recognize by its gait, pace and typical mannerisms; then, one by one, he will act out scenes of pursuit and capture, of alliance, finally of actual assistance. Some dancers thus acquire a great reputation, which they certainly deserve.

These totemic dances have much in common with certain character dances at which the African excels, representational dances. For example, I remember having seen the dance of the bees, of the wild boar, and of the elephant, done with truly remarkable agility and realism.

Totemic dances are distinguished above all by the fact that they are accompanied, one might say rhythmically measured, by the totemic song. Furthermore, while character dances depend to a great extent upon the dancer's inspiration, totemic dance steps are more regulated and have certain invariable features. [513]

779 535 831 A common trait of all religious dances is decency, at least relative decency. They are performed only by men, and women are not admitted except at circumcisions, and even then they do not mingle with the men. There is rarely any sex in them, in contrast to the purely recreational dances, especially those performed in the evening, at which at times license seems to be given to the greatest obscenity.

779 831 Religious dances always have a very marked quality of antiquity, and the majority are very beautiful, in the precise meaning of the word.

In order to give an approximate idea of totemic dances, I have transcribed two of them which seem the most expressive, that of the flower, mvi, and that of the elephant, nzox.

These dances are sung, danced, and mimed at the same time. Each note represents a tom-tom beat, a different bodily position and foot movement, whether a glissade, a leap, a heavy beat, or a rapid weaving in and out.

Totemic dance of the mvi flower:
Musical score, pp. 513-514 of text.]

## [515] 3. General Totemic Rites: Details

779 In order to establish some logical order for totemic rites, we may take a man at his coming into the world, follow him through his principal activities, and leave him only at death. In this way we shall include the complete series of general or particular rites which he must observe. However, we shall obviously have to discuss them from the totemic point of view only.

By general rites I mean those concerned with the race or tribe. Among particular rites, on the other hand, I place all those concerned more specifically with the individual.

General rites are as follows:

1. Circumcision, akĕle
2. Initiation, evôm
3. Consecration of a chief, elôga
4. War, abal
5. Hunting or fishing expeditions, miyên
6. Establishment in new territory, edzal mfifi
7. Ordeals, elun, é̃nu mélan
8. Covenants or blood exchange, abvuna

Particular rites to be noted are:

1. Birth and name giving, abièné, edzü
2. Adoption, añôn moñè
3. Marriage, alux̌
4. Hunting, fishing, farming, mveñe, ayü kos, bifax̌
5. Trade, okira
6. Death, awu

The totemic character is sometimes strongly marked in these rites, sometimes it is almost obscured, barely perceptible. At times that character is underlined merely by a gesture, a call, a prayer. But it is never absent. u [516]

I. Circumcision

881
304 Circumcision cannot be considered a universal rite among Bantu tribes: some practice it, some do not, either because they have never done so or because the custom has been lost in the course of centuries and repeated migrations.

881 304 The Fan and all the tribes of their group have preserved it. In all clans, at a time decided upon by the chief, youths must be circumcised. This rule is also accepted by all the related tribes, Dzèm and Dzandzama, Bulu, Shéké, Batéké, etc.

During my many journeys I hever met a single Fan who had [583] not been circumcised. No young girl would agree to marrying an uncircumcised man, under any conditions. This by the way indi- [588] cates the value, even in terms of Fan custom, of the temporary marriages contracted with Europeans. The Fan look upon these unions simply as concubinage and designate them by the same word, *évex*.

Although the Fan group has kept circumcision, others have not, so that it cannot be said to now be a general rite among the Bantu. The custom is not the result of Semitic infiltration; some Bantu tribes like the Kavirondo, among whom the Arabs have penetrated, do not practice it, while the Fan, who have never been in contact with Moslems, do so.

a) Is circumcision a religious rite?

We shall take up the subject [circumcision] first from the general, then from the particular, point of view.

The first question to be raised is: Is circumcision a religious rite by nature and origin, consecrating a person to a deity, as by a sort of sacrament? (1)

According to certain writers, Renan in particular, circumcision is a purely hygienic custom: "In the beginning," he says, "this custom had neither the widespread character nor the religious significance that was given it later. Without the operation, certain Oriental peoples would be condemned to semi-impotence and dangerous impurities."

Arcin also wrote: "Circumcision is the most important religious ceremony of the black peoples. This practice has probably been made necessary by a special physiological

---

1. Cf. Lagrange, *Études sémitiques* [Studies in Semitic Religion], p. 242.

881
304

structure. (2) But at present any memory of this cause has been entirely effaced and these rites are seen only as an offering to fertility gods."

Let me say right here that, as regards the Fan and the Bantu tribes, this physiological rationalization appears of slight value. In fact, though the Fan and other tribes of their group have adopted circumcision, this is far from being the case among all Bantu, certain of whom, like some in Uganda, have even a horror of it. Yet physiological requirements are identical among tribes of the same race and habitat.

We do not have to discuss here the natural advantages of circumcision. Were they given more considerable, it would be wrong to give a rationalistic explanation derived from hygiene, without taking into account the sum of institutions of which it is a part and of which it represents the moderate component, a very temperate practice compared with others. These institutions are the consecration rites of youths at puberty, and it is precisely because circumcision had a hygienic and moderating quality that it spread so widely and prevailed over other, more barbarous, practices. Circumcision has in fact [518] been practiced throughout the whole world among the greatest variety of populations and races, mostly as part of the initiation ceremonies that link a youth more closely with his tribe and his god or gods.

I agree with the majority of writers that this is an operation that is essentially religious in origin, necessary from the hygienic point of view, (1) but never for physiological reasons.

2. From the medical point of view, this statement is a complete invention.

1. From the purely hygienic point of view: "It is impossible to give a raison d'être for circumcision, except as a religious requirement. It is in no way indicated anatomically (in spite of what Niebuhr, Déscription

881
304

> de l'Arabie [Description of Arabia] and Winer say); and from the point of view of sexual activity, it has no effect upon a man's potency; hygienically, circumcision is insufficiently effective." Colonial Despatch, Medical Report, Sept. 3, 1907.

I should also say, with Father Lagrange -- adding to circumcision the tribal mutilations to be discussed, such as the knocking-out or filing of teeth, scarifications, etc. -- "the religious character of these ceremonies cannot any longer be disputed."

881
304
779

b) Is circumcision a totemic rite?

Granted that circumcision is a religious rite, is it also a totemic one?

According to Frazer, (1) circumcision is part of the initiation rites

> 1. Totemism, p. 47

tion rites that link a youth with his tribe and his god; these initiations have a specific character, that of uniting the young man and the animal life of the totem through an exchange of souls. (2)

> 2. In Australia the neophyte is anointed with blood drawn from a warrior's arm or may even drink some of it. A few magical passes are added, which convey to the candidate the corresponding spiritual powers and gifts. He must sleep on the tombs of his ancestors so as to absorb their virtues. Sometimes he is reputedly killed by a certain Thurembul, who returns him to life, and removes one of his teeth. In this, says Frazer, there may have been an idea of

881
304
779

> rebirth, or of the neophyte's starting a second life; that is why he acquires a new name as soon as he is circumcised, or when the tooth is removed or when he sheds the blood of his family.

I am quite ready to admit with Father Lagrange that circumcision is not restricted to totemic tribes. Among fully totemic tribes, like the Baganda, it is not only not permitted but is even viewed with disgust. [519] I look upon it as basically a religious rite, derived from ancestor worship, and what Frazer says confirms me in this opinion. Nevertheless, I freely admit and even believe that alongside these rites connecting circumcision with ancestor worship there are others, which, coming from the same source, also connect circumcision with the totemic cult; for in many religious phenomena the *mvamayôn* cult and that of the *esayôn* are closely and inseparably related.

In outlining below the practice of circumcision among the Fan, we shall point to the rites that derive from the *mvame*. Our reply to the initial question will then be:

Circumcision among the Fan is certainly a religious rite; it is not a purely totemic phenomenon, but the totem enters into it.

Bros agrees with these conclusions, at least in part. In his opinion, circumcision is a test of puberty, a first-fruits offering to the gods, a purification made to release an evil spirit which vanishes with the blood: above all, it is a pact by which a part of one's blood is given to the tribal god (1) and

1. In my opinion, the term "tribal god" ought not to be used; the Bantu tribes recognize only a single Creator, under different names, and not a god for each tribe.

881 one thereby becomes incorporated in him and in the tribe.
304 Finally, the taboo surrounding this organ of the body, to which
779 the origin of circumcision may be traced -- either because of
the social function of the organ or of the danger of its premature
use, or even because of its independence of volition -- allows
circumcision to be considered as a desecration that has to precede the stage of virility, in order that use may be made of it. (2)

2. Bros, Religion des peuples non-civilisees [Religion of Non-civilized Peoples]. "Circoncision" [Circumcision].

881 Some of these statements hold good for the Fan; some are
304 less applicable. Let me use as an example one of the things
779 that illustrates very well the close connection between circum-
778 cision as a religious rite and childbirth rituals, the fact that
[844] pieces of cloth used to staunch blood are in both cases carefully
kept to be used for the same purpose. [520]

Ordinary warriors place them with their personal totem in the mfek or pineapple-fiber bag which never leaves them. These pieces of cloth, or fragments of them, are always part of totemic sacrifices. The sons of chiefs, on the contrary, are not allowed to keep them; they bury them deep at the base of the sacred fig tree planted when they were born over the remains of the umbilical cord. This custom certainly goes back to remote antiquity. Among the Egyptians, the fig tree was considered sacred and dedicated to the Egyptian Venus, Hathor. From this perhaps comes the word éthu, designating a garment made from the bast of the fig tree. The same word, éthu, has remained in the Fan language with the same meaning, "garment," and the
[287 inland Fan always make vegetable-fiber cloth from the fig tree,
822] which they still dye red; this was formerly the color dedicated
to Hathor, and it has remained the color of betrothal garments.
For the same reason, before marriage, young men and women
stain themselves red from head to foot. It is a color "set apart."

881
304
779

c) The Circumcision Itself

The Fan use the term akéla for circumcision, at least as regards boys. The root of the word is clearly in the verb ekèl, of which the radical element expresses the idea of "cutting" and "removing." For girls the word atsingéla is used, which denotes at once ligature, extension, and excision.

We shall examine:

1) The phenomenon itself
2) The age of the candidate
3) The operation
4) The participants -- patient and operator
5) The instrument

1) The phenomenon itself

Circumcision is universal throughout the Fan nation and no male is exempt. Besides, he would be disgraced, and he would not be able to enter into marriage without having first had this operation. Even children brought up in missions do not escape; as soon as they go back to their villages, [521] they submit with good grace if they have remained uncircumcised.

If old people are questioned about the "why" of the ceremony, it is hard to get an answer from them, and they nearly always fall back on custom, "We've always done it," or propriety, "It's better that way." Both answers, especially the second, are of real value. Yet one day I got a much more interesting reply from a chief in the interior, who told me, "It marks the beginning." And when I insisted on further explanation, he replied, "It is the mark that sanctifies manhood; afterwards one is no longer an animal, one is 'sacred.'" ("E ne ndèm ošu, ndèm a bo fam: ni vale, tšit é séra, mur a ne éki," lit., "It is the mark of the first beginning, the mark which sanctifies virility; after the operation, the animal has disappeared, and there is a man, and he is sacred.") As the chief did not want to say anything more, he fell back upon the rules of secrecy. It was difficult, if not impossible, in the tribe with which I then was, to attribute a Christian or Moslem origin to this reply; the chief has never heard of either of them. It would be much simpler to

881 look at it as a vestige of primitive tradition.

304 To the Fan mind, circumcision is altogether a religious,
779 never a secular, act; everything that I shall have to say about it will illustrate this further.

2) The age of circumcision

The age at which Fan boys are circumcised usually varies from seven to ten. I have never seen a baby circumcised. However, there is nothing prescribed by law or custom on this point. Yet in the interior, the age of ten is far exceeded, and it is not unusual for the operation to take place between sixteen and twenty. Old men are unanimous in saying that this was the ancient custom, and that the time for the operation was made earlier in recent times because of the many casualties that occurred. It is impossible to determine precisely what they mean by "recent times." However, according to all the evidence I could gather, one should hardly go back [522] more than 200 to 300 years, that is, to the time of the great Fan migrations. We can see how unlikely it would have been during that period of confusion to perform the operation successfully at so late an age.

Formerly, circumcision must have closely preceded entering the warrior stage. Certain Fan songs seem to indicate this, and many African tribes have preserved the custom.

All the children of a village are circumcised at the same time at the tribal chief's command; the operation only takes place at certain times, when there appear to be enough children, yearly in some villages, at longer intervals in small ones.

[291] Until circumcision, children may go naked; afterwards a bit of cloth bark of the fig tree will always be worn.

The seven-to-ten-year limit is appreciably exceeded in
881 the following case: a father may, out of pride, make a solemn
304 vow to his akaméyôñ that his son will not be circumcised until
779 he [the son] has killed an enemy. Under those conditions the
782 youth may go naked for a long time; nor can he have any relations with a woman or even live with the one his father may have bought for him as a future wife. Consequently, he will

881 do all he can to end this state. As soon as he has killed an
304 enemy, he hurries with the victim's hand to his father. Cir-
779 cumcision then solemnly takes place before all the warriors, and
782 his marriage is celebrated as soon as the wound has healed.

881 3) Time of the ceremony

304 The chief first decides upon the date, which is almost
779 invariably in the eight days before a full moon.

As soon as the chief has announced that circumcision will shortly take place, he indicates all the children who are to be included; they, under his direction, go off into the forest not
[342] far from the village. After a large space has been cleared, they build open little huts or mere shelters, where they live all together.

Their food is left at the beginning of the path leading to the huts, for no one is supposed to approach; access [523] is above all strictly forbidden to women. The food is plentiful,
[264] and nothing must be thrown away or hidden; everything must be eaten, and the chief supervises this rigorously. (1)

1. One of our missionaries observed the same custom among the more advanced populations of the interior. He even mentions this fact: the rule is so strict that one of the candidates was forced three times in succession to swallow the food that his stomach persistently rejected.

4) Preparations

[351] All around the place where the boys are confined, a fence of reeds (1) is erected, which no one dares jump over. This seclusion

1. The place of circumcision shows well enough that the rite is like a consecration, by blood sacrifice, of the sexual life to which the young man is thereafter admitted. Lagrange, op. cit., p. 244.

881
304 does not usually last longer than eight days, a lunar quarter.
779 Every evening songs and dances are performed in honor of the
[821] moon, which is looked upon as a source of fertility. (2) In Fan,
the same word, *ngon*, denotes "girl" and "moon," an ambiguity
to be found nearly everywhere among African tribes, in varying
[533] degrees. These songs and dances are very special and repetition
of them is strictly prohibited outside the sacred enclosure. (3)

According to Lang, (4) this is the time when a youth is taught about the existence of a beneficent god, a defender of morals, who condemns egoism and adultery. This is so among the Fan. In fact, it is during their retreat the chief teaches the children the *mébara*, or wisdom of the ancestors, and narrates the great deeds of the race. This is as much as we have been able to learn, for the rule of secrecy is scrupulously observed. During the final days the chief makes a point of mixing into the

2. The same belief exists in almost all African tribes; just as in Egypt, the moon presides over rain, which is the earth's source of fertility and thus of human fertility.

3. All I could discover on the subject from my young Christian converts who had already gone through the ceremony was that these songs were "bad" and had as their purpose procreation. There is no doubt that the Fan say things "crudely" in their songs. That is all I can say.

4. *The Making of Religion*, Art.: "Circumcision."

881 During the final days the chief makes a point of mixing into the
304 boys' food certain aphrodisiac stimulants, cardamon seeds [524]
779 (Amomum citriodorum), a wonderful red fruit (Lavigeria), and
832 onzakôn (Antrocaryon klaineanum) which, apart from these oc-
824 casions, only women may eat. They are even forbidden to say the name of that tree, because the word nkôn denotes the male genital organ; they must say onzabili, the onza tree. In addition the fruit of the onzakôn has a slight resemblance to a phallus.

Throughout their seclusion the children sleep stretched out
881 on the ashes of the hearths. They must tell the chief what they
304 have dreamt about; the family totem ought, in fact, to re-
779 veal itself to them at this time. Since the chief speaks to the
828 children frequently and since they know that they are supposed to have the totem in mind, the suggestion, intimate and strange at the same time, leads easily to the desired result. If, however, a different object from the family totem, animal or other, appears more vividly and repeatedly in their imaginations, it would be a sign that the totemic guardian spirit wants to adopt another medium and, consequently, the child's totem, if he has a personal one, has to be changed.

5) The ceremony

881 On the day of the operation, the practitioner, who has
304 been forewarned, goes to the enclosure, accompanied by the
779 fathers. Each child is questioned in turn; then there is a big dance performed in honor of the ancestors and guardian spirits of the clan. Each head of the family has brought along his mvamayôn and now explains it to the child. A new dance is done after this initiation. Each father then stretches his son out on the ground, sits down beside him, and slips his legs beneath the child's body in such a way as to raise the middle of the body. The practitioner has a knife in hand kept specially for this purpose and carefully wrapped in a little sheath. The
[413] knife used to be made of stone, but that kind has become very rare. Knives are now usually made of copper and are curiously worked, one end being beak shaped, the other pointed; they are not hafted. These knives are called ekelokên.

881 The practitioner operates quickly, assisted by the chief of
304 the tribe. Before operating on each child, he hands the knife
779 [525] to the chief, without a word, and the latter accepts it,
also in silence, without saying the usual "thank you" or "very good," abora or mvè.

With girls none of these ceremonies are observed. An experienced matron performs the operation, usually when the child is very young. It is nevertheless a religious act, accompanied by songs and dances, but since only women are present, it was impossible for me to learn the slightest detail.

The tribal chief immediately returns the knife to the practitioner, saying, "Take it and do what has to be done." (Nôñe n'ébo dzam ma yia n'ébo, lit., "Take it so as to do the deed which 'I' ought to do.") This proves that the practitioner is but the chief's delegate. Usually it is the latter who holds the penis firmly. First of all, the father pulls out the foreskin as far as possible and ties it with a bit of string. The penis, thus prepared, is then stretched out on a special board, and the practitioner cuts quickly. This is the most painful part of the operation. Ashes are then rubbed on the open wound. The head
[778] of the family carefully collects the blood, which will constitute a powerful fetish after it has been offered in sacrifice to the mvamayôñ and to the ancestors.

It is a point of honor for the children not to cry out, no matter what the pain. Besides, the pain must be very much lessened by the fact that the chief squeezes the flesh firmly and the operator works quickly. As soon as it is over, the child is taken to be bathed and is then laid on a bed of ashes. His scanty clothing is removed, if that has not already been done during the preceding days, and he is now dressed in a loose garment or a belt from which hangs a thick pad of raffia fiber or thin strips of finely cut banana tree bark, so as to protect him from being hurt. After the operation every father offers
[431] the practitioner a present, often a sheep or at least several hens.
[782 The latter then, according to the customary rites, offers one of
the sheep to the spirits and has part of it burnt. The ashes of the
778] sacrifice, mixed with the collected blood, will constitute the child's fetish. Anything left over is carefully buried in a place

881
304
779

apart, and everyone then avoids letting them be seen. [526] The rest of the sheep is eaten by the children the next day.

They remain in seclusion for a few more days. At the end there is another ceremony, also accompanied by dances and songs. They show the reassembled heads of families that the operation has been successful. They then remove the circumcision belt, put back the ordinary loincloth, and return to the village, where they are feted.

d) The consequences of circumcision

"Everything that has to do with procreation," writes Father Lagrange (1) of these ceremonies (and I quite agree with his conclusions), "is eminently taboo, surrounded with restrictions and precautions imbued with a religious character and sanctioned by strict laws. Through circumcision a person is really affianced by blood. This may perhaps have been one condition which entitled the begotten child to become in turn a member of the both national and religious association, the community." (We have just seen that this is definitely so among the Fan, for an uncircumcised boy would neither be admitted to the first initiation tests for warriors nor be able to marry: both tribe and future wife would be opposed to it.) "Every time blood is shed, one might wonder whether it is in order to make use of its intrinsic power, in the sense of magic, or for expiation, or to link one person to another by exchange of blood and vitality. Here it would seem to be a question of union, since the rite is initiatory: life is to be transmitted by an organ linked to god through blood letting; at the same time, it represents the ending of a very sensible taboo, which saves the youth from premature indulgence, comparable to that which protects growing fruits and cereals and which ends with the first-fruits sacrifice."

Mgr. Le Roy (1) differs somewhat from Father Lagrange

---

1. Études sur les religions sémitiques [Studies in Semitic Religion], pp. 244 ff.

1. La religion des primitifs [The Religion of Primitive Peoples], pp. 235 ff.

881 on the subject of circumcision: "Circumcision, in our view, is
304 connected with the institution of the taboo; it was originally the
779 lifting of a prohibition. Before having gone through this ceremony, a young man cannot marry; he is not acceptable [527] to any woman and he has no right to nuptial relations. And if these should nevertheless, occur -- and they do! -- the child of this forbidden intercourse is accounted 'bad' and must disappear."

848 Among the Fan such a child, without being considered exactly "bad," is thought of as not belonging to the tribe. Since the father has not the right to be a father, he cannot give the child a name; and if the child escapes the first vicissitudes of babyhood, it will soon die of neglect and hunger, scorned by all. This is especially the case with mulattoes, whose birth in itself places them outside the tribe. They are found on the coast and near European settlements, where, along with the decline in moral standards, the family has to a great extent disappeared, with the laws that used to guarantee its integrity and corresponding moral code. In the interior, in spite of the passage of numerous traders and explorers whose morals are no better than those of the coast, mulattoes are very rare, to say the least. We have just given the reason for this.

600 "Here," continues Mgr. Le Roy, "we have a typical and interesting illustration of the principle set forth above. The transmission of human life takes place in a mysterious realm where the activity of the Lord of Creation is manifest, or at least taken for granted, and to which man cannot be admitted except by a sort of authorization from God and with the help of an appropriate ceremony. At the indicated time the prohibition may be removed, but as always in such cases the 'use permit' must be bought back by a blood sacrifice, hence circumcision, the moral purpose of which is obvious, because the taboo or prohibition that it ends is a rigorous obstacle to sexual relations between children who have not reached puberty.

"This institution can be found everywhere; to be so widespread it must have a widely applicable raison d'être; this is

000 none other than the sacred prohibition in the interest of the family's moral welfare, which is lifted, when necessary, in the same interests."

304 881 779 Circumcision for Mgr. Le Roy is, therefore, in short, only "the lifting of a prohibition in the interest of family welfare." [528]

Although this explanation is neat and seems to satisfy all requirements, it still does not appear to me altogether correct. It takes the effect for the cause. Undoubtedly, a lifting of a prohibition in the interest of family welfare does follow circumcision, but the lifting, and the prohibition itself, seems to me very much an effect, a consequence, not the cause, and I believe that the objective is above all the sacrifice, admittedly a sacrifice for the welfare of the race. As Father Lagrange points out, "this system" (initiations, tests, and especially circumcision) "implies a close religious relationship within a social group at a low stage of development. It would seem to be a matter of religious unity. In the great Assyro-Babylonian civilization, there is no evidence of circumcision, but then, as now, among widely scattered peoples, some had adopted it, some had not." Is it then enough to say, as for the Bantu tribes, that those who no longer have it have either abandoned it or never possessed it? If in fact all Bantu tribes come from a single stock, as we believe, all have been familiar with circumcision, and we are dealing with a much more ancient rite.

177 304 881 We have already mentioned the Egyptian infiltration into Fan manners and customs and the influence of their beliefs. Therefore circumcision might go back to them. Herodotus had already pointed out that circumcision came from Egypt and had, by way of Egypt, spread throughout the Mediterranean world (Her. II, 104). "It may well be," writes Father Lagrange on this subject, "that circumcision among Egyptians was not exactly borrowed from an ethical system, but was a tradition from their origins, going back to the time when they started coming down the Nile Valley, according to contemporary opinion.

177 We also find the tradition among the Arabs as far back in their
304 history as we can go."

881 Therefore -- and Johnston is of the same opinion -- circumcision is not a rite devised to meet specific needs but one that dates back to the origins of the human race. From the beginning, man has offered first fruits to God. From this to offering the first fruits of human beings and of life, the step was inevitable, and it was quickly made. [529]

304 In the Fan group at least, circumcision is thus based upon
881 the idea of sacrifice itself and not, as Mgr. Le Roy says, upon
779 the simple lifting of a prohibition that is very useful and very moral. It is based not only on the idea of sacrifice itself but on that of an offering by desecration, which is the very foundation of sacrifice. "Especially at the first use of things it is important to give the gods their share," to renew the covenant with the Master of life. From the beginning, man presented the "first fruits" of things to the deity, above all in order to truly acknowledge his realm. Is not man's life that which is most precious? And the basis of life is certainly the procreative act. Furthermore, the basic concept of clan and tribe is based on the family, so that again from that point of view, procreation is the most important act of life. It is the first fruits of the generative process that will be offered to the Lord of the clan and to the ancestors, deified or not, but supposedly standing by. Therefore this will be a religious act, carried out by the practitioner with the help of the tribal chief and the head of the family, that is, the three clan authorities. So that the ceremony may be more solemn, the remains of the ancestors and of the eponymous animal will be included; finally, as in every sacrifice, blood will be shed. These terms make the sacrifice totemic.

But so that the first fruits may be pure and the shed blood acceptable and effective, they must be truly first fruits. It is therefore very important that they be preserved as such; the means is simple and effective and consists of the éki, that is, the prohibition of certain foods and especially of sexual relations before the set time. The law is not even concerned with the

881 "fruit" that might result from transgressing the prohibition. The
304 fault, *nsem*, must be expiated ritually as a fault, but the law
779 would not consider the child as "bad" or guilty; the law does not take it into account at all, but ignores it: the child is "outside the law," *res nullius*, and is not killed but left to die. It is therefore important that they be really first fruits. Then, too, when the appointed time comes, when a Fan begins to feel himself ready to procreate in his turn, when he can take his place along with the young warriors, the sacrifice will be performed with all formality; once this has been accomplished, [530] but only then, will the prohibition be lifted. The sacrifice ought to be not only carried out but accepted too, because if, for one reason or another -- and this happens -- after circumcision has been performed according to the rules, the practitioner still considers that the spirits of the real or totemic ancestors are not satisfied, an additional sacrifice will be necessary in order to make the first acceptable.

Thus it is clear in what ways our notion of circumcision differs considerably from that of Mgr. Le Roy. In his opinion, it consists of the lifting of a prohibition in the interest of the family's moral welfare a "use permit," that must be bought back by a sacrifice; in our opinion, in agreement with Father Lagrange's, the lifting of the prohibition is not the cause but a natural consequence. The prohibition's objective is circumcision, the "use permit" is the inevitable result, not the cause, of the sacrifice, and circumcision (1) is the very sacrifice of the procreative first fruits, the most important act from the point of view of clan unity and the perpetuation of the family.

II. Initiation

779
884 The second totemic rite that we come upon in the life of a Fan youth is his initiation.

---

1. Lagrange, *Études sur les religions sémitiques* [Studies in Semitic Religion], "Le Sacrifice" [Sacrifice"], pp. 255 ff.

779 884 This rather complicated rite includes, first, the tests I have already mentioned, which make a warrior of the young man, then initiation into the rites, and finally the consecration of weapons.

The young warrior's years of childhood and adolescence have been entirely carefree and completely outside any religious cult. He may have just been taught the name of his personal totem, and perhaps not even that. All he knows is that he is forbidden under rather severe penalties to do certain things, to eat certain kinds of food. He observes these prohibitions rigidly, because he is sure that any infringement will be immediately punished, for isolated _éki_ are never pardoned and must always be expiated. [531]

a) Tests

779 884 626 When he has reached the age for taking his place among the warriors, a young man has first of all to undergo tests designed to show his strength and courage. Severe as they may be very few youths evade them. Besides, it would mean utter dishonor, and the young man who out of weakness or cowardice is either overcome by or doesn't dare face them, would have no choice but to exile himself. This does happen, though rarely, and especially among those few young people who have grown up from childhood as servants of the Europeans. The Fan stigmatize them by a special phrase meaning "men-women good-for-anything," and this expression tells a great deal about the special role they play and the peculiar morals of too many Europeans.

b) Initiation into rites

779 884 After he has passed these preliminary tests, a young man undergoes totemic initiation along with initiation into the ancestor cult. He is first taught the name of the family, clan and tribal totem. For this purpose, on a day chosen as favorable by the practitioner during the initiation already described above, the candidate is conducted in front of a sort of platform covered with dry leaves. First of all, the head of the family brings his _évora biéri_, which, as we know, encloses the ancestral skulls and the materialized totem. The neophyte will learn to distinguish the various objects and to identify the different skulls without a moment's hesitation being permitted.

779 Only then will he be allowed to know about the laws and
884 rights of the totem. He will then receive his personal totem,
as we have described it, will make it the prescribed sacrifice,
778 and will preciously keep the remains of this offering on his own person, enclosed in an antelope horn. Already as a child he wore this horn which now contain the ashes of this sacrifice; it used merely to hang around his neck on a cord or, more often, before his genital organs. After the youth becomes a warrior, he hangs the horn among the other fetishes attached to a leather baldrick which crosses his chest and is hardly ever taken off. [532]

c) Consecration of weapons

779 A youth's childhood ends after the initiation. A whole
884 new era opens up before him, an era of work and fighting and
also of quite different pleasures from those of childhood. He is
411 henceforth admitted to a place among warriors after these painful initiations the proof and marks of which are slashes cut into the back of his neck. Henceforth he may carry a gun; as a boy he had often tried to fire one so as to be ready when the time came. As a warrior with the right to fire it and to go to war, he must first "dedicate" the rifle to a spirit so that he may always shoot straight.

For an African all objects whatever they may be, have a life of their own; therefore, a rifle is a being. Alive with its own life, it will be dedicated to the spirit with the influence most favorable to it, that is, in the realm of space the sun, whose light and whose clear rays will enable it to hit the mark every time and will at the same time dissipate the shadows so that they will fail to conceal the enemy it is aimed at. The weapon will be dedicated to the sun and also to the clan's totemic guardian; in battle it is indeed important to be able to distinguish enemy from friend and not to run the risk of committing a totemic sacrilege. The rifle must be dedicated to both the totem and the sun.

However, it is worth noting that if nowadays a rifle is the only weapon to be dedicated, it is because it has become the

779 principal weapon and because there are very few Fan who do not
884 possess one. Actually, the word for "rifle" in the consecration
411 song mentioned below is sometimes nzali, which really means
"gun," and sometimes mbèñe, which denotes the "crossbow."
The crossbow used to be the Fan national weapon. One of the
words has changed, but the song is no less ancient for that.

In the middle of the village, the young man, accompanied by an older friend, places his rifle so that the first rays of the rising sun will strike it; he arranges around the rifle his totemic fetishes, that is, his childhood totem, which he will hereafter abandon, and his new warrior totem. In order to cast a spell
[533] on his rifle, he then performs the necessary incantations,
[533] among them a hymn or invocation to the sun, of such real beauty and poetic quality that it should be quoted here.

Hymn to the Sun

539

Sun, you who see all things,
You, whose radiant splendor
Pierces the dark mist,
Sun, to you this homage!

To you, sun, king of the sky, divine hunter,
Sun, to you this homage!

Before your flashing glance
And the swift arrows of your fiery quiver,
Into somber depths
Fearful night sinks aghast,
Beneath your blows sparkling with light.
You tear night's mantle,
A black cloak trimmed with fire,
Sprinkled with bright stars,
You tear night's black mantle.

Sun, you who see all things,
You, whose radiant splendor
Pierces the dark mist,
Sun, to you this homage!

779 884 441 533 When the required offerings have been made, before the rifle is lifted, the actual consecration takes place. The tune and words seem to me sufficiently remarkable to warrant quotation. This song, in its melody and structure, recalls the antique airs which have come down to us from the Greeks and Romans. It is always sung by several voices:

539 Song of the Rifle

Anthem: Oh, all of you, listen, listen to the song,
the song of the rifle!
Chorus: Oh, let us all listen, listen to the song,
the song of the rifle!
Solo: For you, alone, O rifle! for you alone,
Far into the woods,
Far, far have I tramped long in the forest,
No longer hearing the barking dogs,
No longer hearing them,
No more than the noise-loving cocks,
No more than the cocks,
Leaving behind the chattering women,
Leaving them in their dark huts. [534]
Refrain: Yes, for you alone, O my rifle!
For your sake only, into the woods,
Into the woods have I gone,
O my rifle, for you alone.
Anthem: All of you, come, listen to the song of the fetish,
The beloved song of the fetish!
Chorus: Let us all come, listen to the song of the rifle,
The beloved song of the rifle! (Refrain: Yes,
for you alone . . .)
Anthem: Come all of you, come, listen well and without noise,
Listen!
Chorus: And silently, heedfully, let us listen.
Solo: For you alone, O rifle! for you alone,
Deep in the woods,
Leaving the village behind,

7: Trilles--75 M-5 (1893-1912) 1912 FH9 Fang FH9

539

I took the men's large knife
With no one seeing me
The knife that hangs from a post hook,
I took the knife,
Fastened it at my side,
Hung it from my baldrick,
With no one seeing me.
I went into the woods,
O my rifle, for you alone.
Anthem: All of you, come, listen to the song of the fetish,
The beloved song of the rifle!
Chorus: Let us all come and listen,
He has taken the knife,
Without anyone seeing him.
Solo: For you alone, O rifle! for you alone,
On the paths of the hunt,
I've wounded my foot on the path,
I've climbed mountains, hills,
I've crossed the streams,
Struggling through a day, a whole day,
I've sought the *ešoň*,
The *ešoň*, *evin*, and *vyo*;
Then, laying bare their flesh,
Taken away their clothing,
Their bloody garments.
There the spirit of the forest dwells.
Anthem: Come, all of you, let us mix the *ešoň*, the *evin*, and *vyo*,
Let us put a spell on the rifle.
Chorus: Let us all come and mix the *ešoň*, the *evin*, and the *vyo*.
And put a spell on the rifle,
Stripping bare their flesh,
Stealing their clothes,
Their bloody garments,
So as to clothe this weapon.
Let us put a spell on the rifle. [535]

884 779 411 The young man is armed. He has undergone the initiation of the bawu and henceforth he has a right to speak in the council. He will not take advantage of this until the day he brings in the hand of an enemy he has killed and he is able to testify to his bravery in the presence of all by this striking proof of a daring exploit, yet often carried out by surprise.

[Pp. 535-536, 18 lines of music.] [537]

III. Consecration of the Chief

a) The ceremony

766 779 622 A tribal chief has died. After the customary lamentation and funeral feast, he has been buried in a temporary grave. Thirty days afterwards the warriors again reassemble for the solemn funeral dance, the fanki. Then the eldest son, surrounded by leading warriors, opens his father's grave, climbs down beside the corpse, and with the consecrated knife detaches the skull, which will soon be added to the skulls of earlier ancestors in the évora biéri. Then the corpse is carefully replaced in the grave, and the totemic sacrifices are completed. We shall go back to these sacrifices when discussing individual mortuary rites. The eldest son or the heir removes the akaméyôn or tribal totem, if he has not already done so. He then throws the earth back onto the corpse and everyone helps him in this dismal task, after he has thrown the first handfuls. All these rites belong to the social mortuary ceremonial.

622 779 The new chief returns to the village. Then begins strictly speaking, the totemic rite of consecration, which takes place at night, without any female observers.

Escorted by all the warriors, to the beating of a tom-tom, the chief takes the évora biéri containing the ancestral skulls and carries it into the forest. The ceremony is secret only as regards women; young boys may be present.

[824 778] The box of skulls is put on a sort of platform made of newly cut poles. These must come from a special tree, the éfirfira, and must all be alive and green. A bit of dead wood

779 778 622 would lead to a ritual offense. These branches are embedded in the earth; they must also be straight, cut from the actual trunk of the tree and not from a branch; upon these poles stuck into the ground, the chief arranges pieces of bamboo (1) which

[284] make a platform. They are tied together, not with the lianas usual for huts, but with lashings [538] made of rattan palm. When that work has been done, the chief places his *évora biéri* on the upper tier; the other family heads put their *bivora bibiér* to the right and left in order of precedence. When all the boxes of skulls have been lined up, each man, after having danced and sung around the altar, then approaches it again, opens his box, removes the ancestral skulls, and places them on the lower tier below the boxes. Upon his family skulls he places the family totem, then his own personal totem. There is another series of dances, accompanied by songs. The chief then advances again, alone, and puts the skull of his immediate ancestor above all the others, dances and sings, then puts the skull inside that of the first ancestor. He also takes his family totem, which by the very fact of his birth is the tribal or clan totem, and places it upon the two superimposed skulls, his father's and that of the clan father. Then there begins a special 533 622 779 song called the Song of Union. The archaic words are nowadays for the most part very hard to understand, the general meaning, on the other hand, is easy to grasp: it deals with the uniting of all the heads of families in direct line and consists of an invocation to the Spirit of the Race, who has passed down through all descendants from the first ancestor so as to produce a united and indivisible whole. The final words of the song express this idea quite clearly:

[342 824] 1. Bamboo is the usual term given by analogy to the palm stems or raffia used in all Fan building, in place of real bamboo ,, which is unknown or a recent importation into Gabon.

539 In you the last returns to the first,
The first returns to the last.
And in common accord,
Your breath that does not die reunites them all,
Your breath reunites them without ever wearying.

It makes an unending whole,
And future children, offspring of our race,
Will also be your children, O father!
As I today am your child.

The *éfirfira* grows and continues to grow.
New branches start from its gnarled trunk,
One after another,
They grow, yet remain always the *éfirfira*.

In you the last returns to the first,
The first returns to the last. [539]

779 622 782 A gelded goat or often a gelded dog is then brought to the wooden altar; it is immolated, and the blood is collected in a clay pot. The chief dips a green palm branch in the blood and then puts it on the altar in such a way as to cover both the totems and the ancestral skulls.

779 622 533 After this first "recognition" comes a second, which consists of a song called "Song of the Visit." The chief sings it, and all the participants repeat the refrain. Thus the Yendun tribe, for instance, the refrain is:

[539] *Bi'ne bibôñe bi Ndun,*
Bi'ne fogo bisésé bibôñe bi Ndun
Ndun a ne Esa bie,
Ndun ve Esa bie bisé.

We are the children of Ndun,
Yes, we are all the children of Ndun,
And Ndun is our father,
Yes, Ndun is the father of us all.

779 622 At the same time, the chief has taken his father's and his first forefather's skulls; he approaches successively the évora biéri of each of the other heads of family and touches their ancestral skulls against those in his hands. He returns to the middle, takes the pot holding the victim's blood, dips his father's de, fly swatter, or into it, and then sprinkles the totems placed near the skulls. He takes his own totem, moves it alongside the clan or tribal totems, fastens them together with a liana and touches them successively against the totems of the other heads of family, while singing the totem song, everyone repeating the refrain after him:

[539] We are the children of Ndun,
And Ndun is our totem (mvamayôn),
Yes, we are the children of Ndun,
And Ndun is totem for us all.

After this ceremony there are several more dances and songs. Finally at the end, the tribal chief is the first to put the skulls back into the évora biéri, and everyone follows his example. He does the same thing with the totems, again followed by all the others. [540] All the boxes are then carefully put aside in a spot cleared in advance.

[778] All return to the open space. The rude altar, where the boxes, skulls, and totems had lain, is destroyed; the boxes are all heaped one upon the other; and great care is taken that no drop of the victim's blood that might have fallen on the ground be profaned by any touch at all. As soon as the victim itself has been immolated, it is laid on freshly cut green banana leaves -- it must never touch the ground -- and placed upon a pyre made from the altar wood, which is lighted. This task always falls to the new chief, never the practitioner. As soon as the victim has been cooked enough, it is put back on the banana leaves and cut up by the chief himself into as many pieces as there are persons present. No piece may be left over; no piece may be carried away. That would be a ritual offense of the gravest kind, and the Fan are convinced, or at least appear to be so, that the totem never fails to punish the wrongdoing by actual death of the

779 622 perpetrator. If necessary, the chief would take this upon himself. Such a case has sometimes occurred, according to certain legends.

The large bones are then again placed upon the pyre, for which the necessary wood has been carefully kept, because to cut or to add more is forbidden. When everything has been consumed, the bones and wood that are left in the form of cinders (1) are pulverized as finely as possible, and the chief scatters the powder on the recently covered grave of his father, accompanied by all the heads of family. The banana leaves that had been used to wrap up the victim are carefully folded into a bundle and thrown to the bottom of a spring or stream below the spot where water is usually drawn, so as to avoid profanation.

In contrast to all the other sacrifices, nothing must remain of this victim nor may anyone keep the slightest trace of it.

Before carrying the ashes of the sacrifice to his father's grave, the chief still has to go through another ceremony just as important, the rite of the spear.

779 622 411 The rite of the spear, or better of the assagais, ašume mékôṅ, the salute to the assagais, only occurs at the enthronement of tribal chiefs and then only if they have come of age, that is, have already been received as warriors bearing the marks or bawu.

779 776 411 171 b) The rite of the spear or the assagais. Ašume mékôṅ.

From the other side of Africa, Father Van den Burgt, (1) of the White Fathers, recently pointed out a curious rite among the Barundi, the rite of the spear, the emblem of Kirâṅa, the

---

[137] 1. Éfirfira is a rather resinous wood, which burns up completely, leaving hardly any cinders.

1. Dictionnaire français-rundi [French-Rundi Dictionary], article, "Kirâṅa."

779 second high spirit. Among the Fan, we have found the same
776 emblem, consecrated to the spirit Ki-ndâña, he also being chief
411 of the lower spirits, of material things, and thus master and chief
171 of all beings on the earth. He is also invoked in time of war.
This is the only information I have been able to obtain on the subject. But in comparing this fact with what we have seen among the Barundi, it certainly appears that a totemic rite is involved. Indeed among them, Imana, the Creator, is the lord of departed souls as, among the Fan, Nzame is also the Creator. Consequently he is foremost of all the ancestors and thus the keystone of the whole religious system. The Fan know this perfectly. When discussing genealogies I have already pointed out that a child or any warrior, when asked what his mébara is, will always end by invoking Nzame, saying: "And he (the first of the race) was created by Nzame, and before that I didn't belong to it, neither I nor anyone else." (Nge mur éto (the father of the race) Nzame émièn a nga bo ñe, ve 'sim ñi, mê mbe dia ve, ve ma, ve muramure.)

Among the Barundi the great rite of the spear consists of homage rendered to the sacred spear of Kirâña, the higher spirit of the Rundi triad, Imana, Ri-Kiramba, and Riangombi. Among the Fan, Kindâña does not belong to the divine triad, which they also recognize: Nzame, Mébère, Nkwa. Kindâña, lit., victorious Power, is chief of all beings under Nzame, and considered only as the principle of the power that animates everything and that is self-perpetuating. He is the opposite of inert matter. [542]

"The neighboring Pygmies," writes Mgr. Le Roy (1) in connection with this Rundi rite, "have the same ceremony, which they appear to have originated." Perhaps, however, we ought to go further back to the very beginnings of the race, since we find the ceremony also among the Fan.

Among the Barundi the rite of the spear takes place in all critical situations. "The usual form of that spear has one white and one black facet and it is said to bear the spirit Kirâña on its

---

1. Op. cit., p. 314.

779 point. At the time of the ceremony the guardian of the spear
776 appears with two assistants; he wears a sort of crown made of a
411 panther skin, part of which hangs down his back. The participants
171 form a semicircle around him, carrying small hollow calabashes
filled with hard seeds (2) that rattle. Then a hymn is begun, sung in an oddly impressive tone, deeply convincing and creating indescribable melancholy. During this evocation, each one picks up a bit of straw, bows down and presents it to the sacred spear, claps his hands together and asks the spirit dwelling on the spearhead for various favors. He then says: "To thee, Father, I make these demands, I offer my homage." Everyone then leaves the hut singing and goes to the resting place of the ancestral spirits.

Among the Fan the salute to the spear thus takes place at
779 the enthronement of the chief. After the victim has been divided
622 and eaten, the chief rises and plants his assagai in the earth, point
411 upwards; the point has been made to gleam by thorough careful
171 burnishing. The choice of spear is not unimportant: it must
have the totemic tribal emblem incised in its hollow and must have already "drunk" enemy blood. The spear is thus planted in the ground so far as possible just where the altar stood; shortly after, at its foot, the chief places his baldrick usually of leopard-skin, holding the materialized totem, the *akaméyôǹ*. [543]

Having done this, he circles around the spear, singing, then < picks up the baldrick and hangs it upon the lance, which usually has several small sharp hooks at the base.

The chief again circles the spear, sings a hymn in honor of *Kindâña*, then stands still. All the others then go to fetch their boxes of ancestral skulls and circle around the spear, singing. As each man passes the chief, he bows, puts his box on the ground, and claps his hands.

At the end of the ceremony the chief removes the spear, puts back the baldrick at his side, and takes everything to his hut.

2. The seeds of the annata tree are used or, even more often, the round hard seeds of canna (*canna spec.*).

779
622
411
171

He then returns to collect the remains of the sacrifice and carry them to his father's grave.

It is evident that the Fan ritual of the spear salute has many analogies to the Rundi ritual, and the same impulse would seem to motivate both.

174
171

c) Rites of initiation and consecration of the chief compared with the religious role of the Pharaoh

In all this it is easy to see a whole embryonic system or rather, as our linguistic research bears out, the vestiges, very corrupt and gradually shriveling away, of a religious system that is very old and goes back to the very beginnings of the race.

The legends, customs, and especially the language make it possible for us to see, with all the reservations necessary to such a hypothesis, a pale reflection, perhaps a decadent reminder, of Egyptian religion.

It would be of great interest in the first place to try to find out if the Fan word denoting "chief," nzue -- from n for agency and zue, to command, to order -- is not related to Egyptian (1), to pray, adore,

sua, to pray, adore, which was originally the chief's main function, or again to Suten, meaning "king," which comes from the word seten [544], to determine by knife, which means "to kill." The king is thus in theory he who slays the sacrificial victim, the sacrificer.

The Pharaoh formerly acted in a general way as a Fan chief still does today, without, one must admit, any of the trappings of majesty -- as I have said, he is a pale reflection.

He used to go himself, at least fictitiously, to capture the victim, a wild bull. He immolated it, cut it up, and offered it to the deity whose son he was. He was not only the sacrificer

---

1. There are other resemblances between the two languages, to which I shall refer later: kha (Eg.), crown, and khu (Fg.), chief; khala, a fortified place, and dzal, fortified village (kraal); ka, to leave, and ka, to go away, etc.; ko, hook, and lko, hook, whence akôn̄, hooked, barbed spear.

174
171
who offers the victim but also the priest who alone was authorized to make an offering, and without his intervention, his subjects could not expect heaven to accept their offerings, even the most modest. "Suten don hotep" -- The king gives the offering, can be read on innumerable votive monuments, from the most imposing to the humblest. The deity would not pay attention to the offering if it did not come from the king. I recall the prince of Khéta's words which I have already quoted: "God would not accept any offering of Khéta that had not been seen by Pharaoh, the emanation of heaven."

Mediator between heaven and earth, Pharaoh alone is qualified to give to the Deity or to receive His gifts. If another priest takes his place, as for practical reasons nearly always happens, that priest will be acting as a delegate of the king and will announce the royal order by which he has access to God: "It is the king who sends me to see the deity," says he upon opening the gates of naos [sic]. Even a priest of the highest rank may present himself only by virtue of that delegation. To penetrate all the way to the temple sanctuary is in fact like penetrating heaven, (1) for the deity is there as much as in

1. An inscription at Edfou, quoted by Rochemonteix, reads: "He who penetrates the temple penetrates heaven."

heaven: to approach the deity one must be divine oneself, like a son of Pharaoh or at least a representative of this divine Son. God's house, the temple, was built by Pharaoh himself, (2) the

2. Virey: Religion de l'ancienne Égypte [The Religion of Ancient Egypt] (ed. 1909), p. 125.

sole owner of Egyptian soil by a divine gift made at his coronation. (3)

Cf. Lefébure, Rites Egyptiens [Egyptian Rites], where one will find numerous points of comparison with the rites I have mentioned. [545]

171 174 We find further confirmation of the foregoing in the following lines: "In archaic times, before the unification of Egypt into a single kingdom, it was no doubt the tribal chiefs who, as Pharaoh did later for the entire country, declared war, dispensed justice, and offered the sacrifices." (1)

1. *The Life-Work of Sir Peter Le Page Renouf* (Paris, 1902-07), Vol. 2, p. 351, "The Priestly Character of the Earliest Egyptian Civilization."

As religious leader the]Fan] tribal chief can thus delegate his authority only to the practitioner; as totemic chief, only to his direct consanguineal heir.

614 This is true to such a degree that if, for instance, the family should die out, the tribe would not come to an end or be destroyed, for the elders of the clan or of the mother tribe would trace genealogies back to the beginning or source of the race and find a secondary family related more closely to the founder of the race; that secondary family would in turn become the main lineage. This transfer comes about quite naturally, without hitch or conflict, merely by force of circumstances. In some cases, especially with a small clan, families will attach themselves to other clans; again, according to the formative law given earlier, new clans will be created, filials of the mother branch. If a mother clan is involved, then, on the contrary, families will attach themselves more willingly to the filial branch (branch *in* *esa*), where they will find the family totem (*esamvên*, *esamvûn*, etc.).

648 d) Mistakes made by European administration in appointing new tribal chiefs from outside the main lineage

622 Clearly the chief mistake, and hence the lack of success, of civil administrators or military leaders who for one reason or another depose the legitimate chief of a tribe and appoint another is clear from the totemic laws just enumerated and the very structure of the race. I willingly admit that sometimes such depositions and appointments may, and often should, be made,

648 [546] for perfectly legitimate reasons, in the interests of the
622 conquering country and even of the administered peoples. Nevertheless, if European administrators knew more about the customs of the country, (1) as would be very desirable, they would not leave themselves open to certain failure and sometimes to humiliating defeat by picking out a man who, though perfectly worthy, cannot be appointed chief according to the laws of the land.

As I myself have seen, it often happens that the legitimate chief, tired of endless trouble, reproaches, and quite justifiable fines, in some way agrees to the new state of affairs, which henceforth relieves him of responsibility and shelters him from the conqueror's laws, ordinances, and capriciousness, or what he takes to be such. Thus, in certain villages, there will be a chief "at the disposal" of Europeans, just as there are certain women, always supposedly virgins, at their disposal. Actually, these chiefs will have only factitious authority, dependent entirely upon the power of the white man. They will also be in constant danger of being poisoned or of disappearing in more or less occult fashion. They are obeyed out of fear, but only in matters that have to do with government, such as forced labor, requisitioned foodstuffs, auxiliary workers, and hardly mentionable favors, but as concerns everything else, their authority is nil, not only in fact but in principle. How, for instance, could they, when there is danger to clan or tribe, invoke a general totem which is not theirs and of which they are neither representatives nor custodians?

Thus we can see the source of the mistake of European administrations, who are very little concerned anyhow with the ideas underlying the indigenous structure and hence the very existence of the tribe, and who want to give it a code made up for Europeans, an impossible task. To apply the Napoleonic

---

1. Especially since the law permits native customs "in so far as they are not contrary to decency and morality."

648 622 Code to indigenous tribes, as has been decreed in Gabon, is one of those governmental aberrations that reveals as profound an ignorance as possible of the people to be governed and the principles of government. [547]

For the same reasons, one can understand how impossible it is to elect a chief outside the established rules of succession. A chief appointed from outside the main lineage has not, and cannot have, authority.

e) Change of clan totem

779 622 614 When, for the above reasons, authority have passed to another clan family, the public cult remains the same. But it must be emphasized as of the greatest importance that the ancestral totem disappears, since it has no longer an eponymous representative of its own blood. It will be replaced by the family totem of the new chief, which then becomes the totem for the whole tribe or clan. Far from being hypothetical, this is, on the contrary, a repeated occurrence, of which the following is a typical illustration.

A certain Mba-Alame, of the Yebiken or Banana clan, left the tribe after a dispute with his clan chief and went to establish a village on a hill facing his old village. While remaining on fairly good terms with the people of his former clan, his first concern was to create a new family of his own and to cut himself off distinctly from his former companions. He therefore changed his name and took another, which happened to be Nzoge Nze, Elephant-son-of the Panther. The panther became his new totem and from then on, that of his sons and of the future clan. He was in the full sense of the term, the new father of the tribe, able to say more justifiably than Marshal Lefebevre once did: "We are the forefathers!"

In order to undertake this sort of action, a man must have a very resolute character, capable of breaking with his kin, friends, and clan without fearing the always fatal reprisals.

Moreover, such a happening is only possible if the tribe is small enough, because in a large tribe the chief would be very

779 622 614 [575] unlikely to allow such a flouting of his authority. It is also feasible if the chief is old and feeble, and the rebel held in awe for his physical strength and especially his notorious bad temper, based on substantial proof. Also the "deserter" or "uprooted" man must not belong to any secret "clan" society, because the initiates never pardon [548] desertion, this is a primary and always inviolable law.

And that is not all. It is imperative for the new founder to find a willing totem. The choice cannot be at random, as some people may imagine, and there must be a series of sacrifices during which the chosen animal indicates its acceptance. In such a case, the personal totem will receive this honor, for it cannot be changed and not to select it would be a gross insult that would unfailingly lead to significant revenge. But the personal totem must agree to become the tribal totem. In so doing, the spirit -- much more intelligent than man -- knows that it is agreeing to become his actual and titular guardian and it is not always anxious to do so. In similar circumstances, Nzoge Nze admitted to me one day that before finally acquiring an accepting totem he had had to wait for several months and to sacrifice a good many fowls and even kids. The practitioner also had to be satisfied.

It should be observed that following this acceptance all panthers did not become Nzoge Nze's totems, but only those who inhabited the country and were the offspring or descendants of his *nze* or particular totem panther. This proves the truth of our system. Furthermore, these panthers were sacred only to Nzoge Nze, for each particular totem is particular only to its owner, not to his next of kin. Thus, one of Nze's sons had the anteater, *avil*, for a totem: he was therefore not supposed to eat it, although his brothers and sons did so with impunity. But once Nzoge Nze's totem, *nze*, becomes the family and, therefore the tribal totem, his children will avoid killing any panther, on the chance that one might be related to that *nze*. However, should they happen to kill and eat one, the offense would be only hypothetical and before expiating it, they would make the

779 necessary investigation by sacrifices. And the totem, under
622 penalty of not receiving any expiation, should reveal its rela-
614 tionship. But as Nzoge Nze becomes more of a remote ancestor, the risk of relationship with every panther grows, for each panther may be related to the eponymous ancestor and consequently the law becomes more stringent. Should a panther enter villages and kill a few innocent people, [549] such as women and children, The men of the eponymous clan would be permitted to kill it, and only in such a case, but they would still be forbidden to eat it. When after a series of sacrifices for this purpose, it has been duly established that revenge for some unexpiated totemic offense is not involved, that is proof that the panther in question does not belong to the eponymous panther clan. It is a "foreigner" or "deserter", the latter being quite common in certain animal species, one of whose members may leave the group to go off on his own and become a "solitary," as do elephants, panthers, wild boars, gorillas. It is then perfectly lawful to attack it and kill it if possible. A trifling ritual expiation will suffice, proportionate to the very small likelihood of having killed an ally, an extremely slight probability, since actions are never taken without previous assent of the totem chief of the tribe. The responsibility will be his in case of mistake.

IV. War and Palavers

511 Life is easy for the Fan.

Close to his village, the great forest begins; it abounds in game, and he has not far to go to be able to shoot, at point-blank range, monkeys, antelopes, wild boars, even elephants. There are innumerable streams and rivers swarming with fish, especially carp; traps, weirs, nets, everything is good to catch them with -- everything succeeds. A Fan hunts and fishes when he feels like it; there are no laws interfering with his inclinations. Banana and manioc plantations, which provide the basic subsistence, give hardly any trouble. At the start of each season there are a few days of work at slashing-and-burning, the ashes providing fertilizer. After that, all the labor and care of the crops falls
517 upon the women. The Fan is therefore idle most of the day and

517 from this comes about the endless palavers about everything and nothing, for lack of anything else to do.

721 However, if for one reason or another war threatens the tribe or has to be declared, the Fan then seems to awaken from his lethargy. Before the decision to fight, [550] there must be lengthy palavers. The totem has but a small part in these palavers, but no warrior would put in his word without having first taken his totem in hand and given it a brief scolding, often just one word, an exclamation, which only the most attentive would hear.

721 When all the warriors have had their say, the chief rises
537 and sums up everything that has been said, before beginning his
own speech. During this report, he usually remains at his place.
He then goes to the middle of the assembly, his chief's baton
in his hand and across his chest the baldrick from which the
akaméyôn always hangs. "I am so-and-so," he begins, "son of
so-and-so, and my father was chief of the race. We are the sons
of such-and-such totem, and our akaméyôn protects us." After
[201] these words, he stamps on the ground with his foot, or more
often, with his baton, as if to testify to the truth of what he has
said, and then gives his own opinion. When he has finished he
holds up the tribal totem to bear witness to his words, then returns to his place.

779 If war is declared the totemic ceremonies are more pro-
721 nounced. At first they will be nearly like those described for
782 the initiation and consecration of the chief. The same altar is
put up in the forest with the same rites; wood of the éfirfira is again used for construction. On the appointed day, all the warriors make their way into the forest, each head of a family carrying his évora biéri. The skulls are set out on the altar, and each totem at its place. The victim is then brought forward.

The scene at this point changes completely. Neither a dog nor a kid is immolated -- it must always be a man, either a prisoner of war or some captive bought back from a neighboring tribe. A woman may never replace a man. Nor may a man or child belonging to the tribe, nor one whose mother belonged either to the tribe or to an allied tribe, be used as victim; for

779 that would be against totemic law and would mean sacrilege.
721 In order to avoid this ritual offense, which would necessitate ex-
piation and would necessitate expiation and would furthermore
782 wipe out all the efficacy of the sacrifice, the chief first of all
approaches [551] the victim, and asks his name, race, and
tribe. Is there no obstacle to the sacrifice? "*A ne mvè*," he
cries, "*a ne nwuba* (he is good, he is 'dedicated')!" The man
is then tied to the foot of the altar and very rarely does he re-
[761] sist. All Africans resign themselves to death with almost un-
conscious ease, when they see that it is inevitable. (1)

> 1. In certain villages I have sometimes met such men destined for sacrifice, because they are often kept for many weeks. They walked around in the villages, apparently free, well fed, and well treated; the only sign of their captivity was a rather light block of wood well fastened to one of their feet, which they dragged along. Within the village this shackle was not much of an encumbrance, but in the forest it would have been an almost insurmountable obstacle to flight. Countless times, I have offered either to help them escape or to have the colonial authority free them. "What for?" they used to reply; "I'm well fed and treated; death is going to come anyway. *Awu nzu mbèmbè*! (What's the use!)"

So as to prevent any possible struggle, the evening before,
[276] the victim is given an intoxicating beverage, containing mostly
the juice of *ebè* and of *yam* (hemp). As soon as he has been
779 tied to the altar, and the chief has pronounced the ritual words,
721 the warriors start putting on their war dress. First they paint
782 their bodies red with *baza* (1) dye, and upon this first layer they
302
386

1. *Pterocarpus angolensis*: the wood is

779 721 782

> mashed and mixed with oil and produces a splendid, very lasting red dye.

302 386 draw white horizontal lines with white clay (mfem). A wide black circle is traced around the eyes; on the forehead each one draws the likeness or symbol of his tribal or clan totem, or instead, they sometimes draw it on their temples or cheeks. Thus the "axe" of the Amvom, actually the likeness of a boa, their totem serpent, winds over their cheeks and temples and ends near the eyes. To enliven this image, the juice of a grassy lily, the chlorophyton (ayân é si), is used, which gives a long-lasting, blueish color. On the chest each one then draws his individual totem in black with gardenia juice.

721 779 782 Once they have finished these preparations, the warriors pick up their weapons and fetishes and begin the war dance, which consists of two parts: a totemic dance and then the real war dance, [552] which has a stronger beat and is more lively. I have already described this before in connection with the war song, which here accompanies the dance.

After the war dance the chief approaches the victim. He is forced to his knees; the practitioner draws a white line on his neck, then violently pulls his head forward, while an assistant twists his arms behind his back. The practitioner cuts off his head at one quick blow with the sacrificial knife, and tosses it onto the altar. The chief collects the spouting blood in a pot kept for the purpose, a new pot which will afterwards be broken. As soon as the blood stops, the corpse is laid on fresh banana leaves and the practitioner, helped by the chief, opens his chest, taking care to use only two knife strokes: one across and one up and down. The heart is taken out and placed beside the skulls; then the lungs and liver are removed. According to the body's [787] last twitching and the position of the organs, the practitioner predicts the outcome of the war. It will either be fortunate or cause the death of many warriors. "The funeral songs will last a long time," he may say, and the crowd will raise a cry of distress! If on the contrary the auguries are favorable, there will be shouts of joy, a song of triumph and gladness.

721 Everyone then comes near, the chief first, and dips a finger
779 into the pot of blood and tastes it. The practitioner also dips in
782 his finger and with it touches each warrior's totem to make the
266 so-called racial mark (ndem ayŏŭ). "Adopted" warriors are ex-
608 cluded from this ceremony, perhaps the only occasion when a
distinction is drawn between them and the tribe; in some smaller
clans they are not excluded from this ceremony.

721 When a tribe is populous and a single victim would not be
779 enough, two, three, and sometimes ten or more are provided.

782 As soon as each warrior has thus "renewed the mark," the
sacred dances start again. During that time the chief joins in
at first, then takes what remains of the blood, smears his ances-
tral skulls with it, and then sprinkles the tribal totems while the
warriors sing the totem song. [553] The practitioner, helped by
[824] his acolytes makes a kind of large sticky ball from the sap of cer-
tain rubber creepers (1) and a kind of gum,(2) and knead it inside
the victim's thoracic cavity so that it becomes soaked with blood.
[787] At the end of the ceremony he takes a bit from this ball and ap-
plies it to each warrior's chest. According to how long it sticks,
it will give an augury about the warrior's life, death, and the
wounds he will receive.

721 As soon as the ceremonies are completed the victims are
782 cut into thin strips, and each person receives his share. The feast
266 begins. This is the end of the actual totemic ceremony, to be
followed from then on by purely religious and fetishist rites. I
therefore need say no more on the subject.

721 After the meal, the dance, and the songs, the skulls and
totems are put back in the évora biéri and carried back to the huts,

1. Landolphia Klaineana and Thollonii of the Apocyneceae.

2. This gum is produced by the Acacia erubescens Wildm. of the acacia family.

721 Everyone then prepares for battle.

V. Large Hunting Expeditions

224 Apart from war, the principal event in Fan life consists of large hunting and fishing expeditions, organized by the whole tribe, which are always an abundant source of riches. Since an event of this sort concerns the clan or tribe as a whole, the totem plays a part, but to a rather limited degree.

For individual, private hunts only the individual totem is invoked. The ceremony is very brief, if it can even be called such. It consists, not of homage rendered, but rather of what might be called a preventive ritual. In no case does the hunter want to kill his totem, for that might draw down upon him the gr gravest dangers and greatest misfortunes. Before going off to hunt, while loading his rifle, he will see to it that his totem is touched against the rifle. Furthermore, if he is undertaking a more important hunt, as for elephant, or a more dangerous one, as for panther; he will mix with his powder a bit of the ashes [554] from his totemic sacrifice. He will then invoke his hunting fetish, often merely by touching it. The main object of these ceremonies is to ask the totem's help and also to keep the totem out of the way so as not to be exposed to any ritual offense, either by unwittingly failing to respect it or by wounding or killing it.

For large hunts the ceremonies will be quite similar, though a bit more complicated. This, in brief, is how big hunting expeditions are arranged: The Fan begin by hemming in a whole forest. Several hundred -- sometimes many more -- men come together and begin by surrounding the chosen forest with a belt of rattan wattles; a creeper winds above the wattling, following the same route, and to the creeper the hunters tie here and there dry leaves of light reeds whose slight rustling when disturbed is enough to frighten the game. There is a break in the barrier at each path into the forest, where a deep ditch is dug and carefully camouflaged by boughs and sometimes so well covered with earth that even the most wary are deceived. A pointed stake is set in the bottom of the

224 ditch, its point in the air, so that any animal falling in will almost certainly be pierced. Having finished with these preliminaries, the hunters make ready to actually beat for game. First there will have been a large sacrifice. Suppose a tribe has the scaly anteater (ye-mvil) for its totem. The tribal chief is the first to start on the hunt after a preparatory fast of three days. During that time he has remained apart in a small reed hut in the midst of the forest, eating only the food he brought with him, which he must first have placed on the évora biéri. He drinks only from an aromatic leaf folded into a cone; furthermore, [834] he abstains from any relations with his wives, because contact with women is supposed at such times to be an offense against the totem (nsem éki). After these three days he makes a [782] fetish, that is, a sacrifice to the tribal or clan totem, according to the usual practice; it consists of a goat at least or better a sheep. Formerly always and nowadays even occasionally, it was [567] always a slave. After the sacrifice [555] the chief takes part of the victim -- the rest belongs to the practitioner -- and throughout the hunt, he must eat no other meat. He then leaves and returns to the village only when he has met with, captured alive if possible, or if not, slain, the totem animal. If he kills it he must take care that none of the animal's blood drips onto the path, thus risking being profaned, for that would be another ritual offense. Therefore the chief carefully closes the wound with dry leaves and the fluff from a banana tree.

While returning to the village the chief must be seen by no [201] woman; he therefore takes care to announce his arrival by a special call, which is answered by a tom-tom, and then dashes into his hut. The women who happen to be in the village, outside their huts, must go inside quickly.

The totem animal is then placed on the évora biéri. If it is too large to fit, the chief opens it and puts on the évora the [774] brains, lungs, and heart, the three parts which contain the life principle and the various souls. The carcass is offered in sacrifice in the accustomed manner and then divided among all the hunters.

224 Should the animal be inadvertently killed during the beat for game, it cannot take revenge for the offense, nor can the clan totem do so. By sacrifice and communion all the clan members have become sharers of the totem, which therefore would be taking revenge on itself:

"A séra né ki édjéze émièn émièn nlèm wula (He cannot eat his own heart)."

After the meal the hunters get on with the job. They leap over the wattles, then gradually tighten the circle around the forest by means of strong cords so as eventually to drive all the encircled animals into a large clearing, prepared in advance, where they are killed one by one. Sometimes also at this place, an enormous pit has been dug in advance, and the bewildered (1) animals fall into it.

When they have all been killed, the flaying and disemboweling begins. However, first the chief makes sure that [556] no totem animals have by mischance got into the pit. If so they are carefully removed, placed on banana leaves, and tied up so as to be disguised; the next night they are secretly carried to a distant spot and deeply buried. Yet one animal may be kept out, taken back to the village by the chief, and offered in a further sacrifice. All the hunters partake of it so as to be protected from any ritual offense.

226 Large fishing expeditions are occasions for almost the same ceremonies. Before beginning to dam a river or change the course of a stream, a totemic sacrifice is first undertaken; a victim is offered and then the actual sacrifice is made. If by chance the clan totem is a fish, the ceremonies would be identical to those described above.

After the fishing another totemic sacrifice is performed with the customary rites; to neglect this prescription might lead to grave dangers for the tribe.

1. This beat for game is called ngol, especially when it is for elephants.

VI. The Establishment of a New Village

361 Various circumstances may lead to the setting-up of a new
621 village. Worked-out land, denuded hunting anf fishing grounds,
166 decaying huts, a disease decimating the children, the chief's
787 death, a defeat in war, sometimes merely the wish to push on,
are the principal reasons.

The spirits are consulted before departure is considered. [Footnote omitted.] There is a triple sacrifice; to the spiritual guardians of the village, to the ancestors, and to the totem. If the three replies are favorable, plans may go ahead. Otherwise, a sacrifice producing an ill-omened interpretation will be undertaken again, after a few days, until a favorable result is obtained.

361 After this first test a suitable location is sought. As this
choice is made by delegates, the practitioner is called upon and
621 he, with all the male inhabitants, combs the [557] surroundings
of the new village, singing and dancing so as to drive away malignant spirits or any that might be injurious to the new establishment.

361 All the men then come together in the middle of what will
621 be the future village, and the chief picks out the spot where he
will build his own hut. A sacrifice is offered there, first to the
769 totem and then to the spirits of the ancestors. To do this a roof
782 of leaves is hastily erected and roughly placed on a few stakes.
The évora biéri is carried underneath the roof and the chief puts in front of the unopened box a black hen and a kid.

Before slaughtering the two victims, the chief removes the akaméyon from his baldrick and blows three times in the oviara, turning in three different directions. The objective of this ceremony is to dispel evil spirits. He then drags the akaméyon behind him over the entire site of the new village. After one round he does another, holding the akaméyon in his hand. Thus malignant spirits of earth and air will be dispersed. The akaméyon is then put on the évora biéri. The chief slaughters the hen by cutting off its head, grasps it by the feet, and sprinkles the akaméyon and box. He again traverses the village, sprinkling

361 the sites of future huts with blood. The hen is then opened up
621 and divided among the principal warriors and the chief's relatives.
769 This strictly, speaking, constitutes the totemic sacrifice. The
782 kid or sheep is then offered to the spirits of departed souls and to
the ancestors.

After the sacrifice to ancestors the chief puts the akaméyôǹ
361 back at his side. From the mfex or pouch, which is never re-
621 moved, he draws forth a small bundle of dirty material wrapped
769 around a bit of red wood, ashes, and a few bones. All this
778 comes from a sacrifice to the totem like that already described.
To these he adds the remnants of the recent sacrifice and buries
[824] it all deep in a hole in which he drives a strong stake of élun
or éfirfira wood; sometimes a young ebony tree is also used.
[822 At the top of the stake he fixes a ball of paste made of red wood,
842] white chalk -- the colors of sacrifices and spirits, and manioc,
the symbol of fertility. A part of the clan or tribal totem is
also inserted. The practitioner, with many gestures, songs,
and dances imprisons within it all the evil spirits of the air.
[558]

The practitioner sows maize in the middle of the village,
then plants a manioc root and particularly a euphorbia (euphorbia
antiquorum), and puts a small fence around, so that the plants
[787] will not be desecrated. The village's prosperity depends upon their
rapid growth. Should they wither, the chosen spot will be
abandoned. Euphorbia has the power of averting thunder and evil
[824] spirits by means of its bristling points. Amaryllis and
immortelles are often planted at the foot of the euphorbia, along
with a few stalks of sugar cane. The amaryllis and immortelles
ought to come from the old village, having issued from those
which the chief's first wife had formerly brought from her
[842] native village at her marriage. Sugar cane is a symbol of
fertility.

241 The women plant maize everywhere after these prelimi-
361 naries, and its rapid growth ensures basic subsistence. Mean-
while the men build the huts. The first ears of maize will
certainly be offered to the guardian totem. Dried and preserved
in the form of a coronet, they will provide seed for the following
year.

VII. Ordeals

695 In ordeals (1) or judicial tests the appeal to the totem's intervention plays a fairly large part.

1. Ordeals, from the Anglo-Saxon ordaal [ordâl -dél], in modern German, Urteil, judgement.

These tests are very common in Bantu tribes; and we [171] find the same thing on the other side of Africa, among the Jaluo at Kiviri.

The form of ordeal among these peoples is as follows and closely resembles that of the Fan. "A small pot of water is placed on the fire. A little wimbi-flour and a bit of 'medicine' are put into the water. If the water boils over, the man is guilty, if not, he is innocent.

"A gourd basin with a large hole cut in the bottom is placed on a flat stone. Water is poured into the calabash, the bottom of which being, of course, not close-fitting to the stone would permit ordinarily of a leakage [I have emended an obvious misprint here, "bakage."--Translator] But the medicine man who attends puts into the bottom of the calabash crushed-up leaves of a kind of mimosa [559] which, for a time at least, stop the leakage and enable the calabash to be filled up with water, the retention of the water by the calabash proving the man to be innocent.

"Dry flour is given to the suspected persons. If innocent, he can swallow it; if he is able‡ to moisten the flour with his saliva and swallow it, he is shown to be guilty." (1)

1. Sir Harry Johnston, op. cit., "The Jaluo."

The Fan often resort to ordeals, especially in the following circumstances: accusations of theft, adultery, murder, sorcery, "sins" against the clan or village totem. Without going into details, I shall point out merely the part played by the totem.

‡[Errata; should be "unable". —Analyst]

685 If the offense is admitted, punishment follows immediately. With theft, for instance, the person who has committed larceny must make a restitution of double the value. In some tribes, the thief if condemned to lose an ear, a finger, a hand, sometimes a foot. Often he may be sold into slavery. Among the Fan he has merely to return twice the amount stolen.

684 In case of adultery, the culprit pays the value of the woman and is also often kept prisoner for a long time in the plaintiff's village; his head is shaved and he is exposed to the sun, covered with spices. If payment is not made, and even if it is, the woman's father or husband has the right -- and makes use of it -- to cut the joints of the culprit's fingers so that he is made almost powerless. Women are cruelly beaten and spices are rubbed into her wounds. She is also chastised with the [412] nkôn éki, (2) a kind of long iron shears used to pinch deeply and cruelly burn the genital organs. At the second offense her nose and ears are cut off; a third brings death.

682 In case of murder, the murderer, when captured, is killed and eaten. Furthermore, his family must pay compensation with a woman or the equivalent value, that is, two lives for one.

695 For all other charges and for those just mentioned, when the acknowledged or presumed culprit denies his guilt, judicial trial is required. [560]

Whatever the ordeal, they may all be considered from two points of view, or even are of two degrees. The first ordeal is intended to "indicate" the likely culprit; the second, to decide whether or not he is really guilty. Punishment is immediate and strikes simultaneously at body and soul.

The first step is therefore to discover the culprit. With theft, murder, or sorcery, the ordeals vary according to the case.

---

2. This is the name of certain villages where the blacksmiths are found who are skilfull in making these instruments of torture.

695 The following are some of the principal kinds:

A man is accused of murder. He will first have to be
694 seized; if that is impossible, it does not much matter. Since
672 members of the tribe stick together, another man will be
619 seized, no matter whom. If this cannot be done, the Fan may
682 even take a man belonging to another tribe, who will be kept
prisoner until his family and tribe, taking up the cudgels in
their turn, capture either the culprit or a member of the culprit's tribe. One can see to what degree such solidarity may lead to retaliation.

Once a man has been caught, guilty or not, he undergoes
695 one of the following tests:

682 The dzismébiãn is the eye ordeal. A person is brought before the chief, gagged and with his head pulled back. The practitioner takes a little pot made from the hard shell of a
[278] small gourd called ngon, which is filled with a certain liquid
consisting of vegetable poisons with an atropine base? The presumed culprit has the right -- and often takes advantage of it -- to require his own totem to be dipped in the liquid. The contents of the pot are then poured into his eye. If the eye stays in its socket, the man is innocent; if the eye is destroyed or raised out of the socket, he is guilty. (1) In the latter case he is immediately killed by a knife stroke. He may nevertheless ask to drink the test poison, provided that he is buying back his life for the first time. This is often permitted.

A second and more generally used ordeal is the following, called médzim mé ne ayôn, burning water. [561]

The practitioner boils water in a pot. When it comes to a boil, he throws in a wire ring, and the presumed culprit must retrieve it without burning himself; if his hand is injured, he is declared guilty, but if not, he is adjudged innocent and is dismissed. In such a case, the plaintiff himself is punished and must drink the test poison. The accused man has the right to

[171] 1. The same test occurs among the Bangala and Barundi.

695 boil his own totem in the pot, but so has the practitioner, in
682 order to counterbalance the power of the accused man's totem.

The red-hot iron test, éki biâṅ or biâṅ éki biâṅ, is the third ordeal.

The accused man's knife is heated red hot, then pressed to his cheek; if the cheek is burnt, he is guilty; otherwise, he is declared innocent. He has the right to throw into the fire, in which the iron is heated, the ashes of his individual totem; he also has the right to rub with this same totem that part of his body to which the red-hot iron will be applied.

There is no need to dwell on how easy subterfuges would be, all the more so since before each ceremony the presumed culprit is allowed to apply a few strong poultices or substances to harden his skin. The totem would then be only more effective!

If declared innocent, the accused man nevertheless owes a sacrifice to his mvane, a debt that will be readily discharged.

685 In case of theft there are also three tests used, as follows:
695 for the otura biâṅ, the practitioner lights a large fire in
787 the middle of the village, fed with special kinds of wood. When the fire has caught well, he throws an armful of wet leaves on it; he then moves back, having pronounced above the rising smoke certain magical words. The column of smoke at first rises straight up; suddenly, without wind (often there is not a breath), without any visible physical action on the part of the practitioner or anyone else (because they are all at a distance), it curves inward, we are told, eddies, and then advances towards a hut which it completely envelopes. The hut's owner is immediately seized and declared guilty [562]; however, he can insist on drinking the test poison, provided that he is buying back his life for the first time. One cannot redeem oneself from the test poison.

The smoke test has always seemed to me one of the most difficult to explain. I have witnessed it several times and in spite of the closest attention have not been able to perceive the least trickery.

685 A second test is the following: the practitioner lies on the
695 ground and appears to listen to mysterious voices which are heard,
787 in fact, as if coming out of the earth. Probably a simple effect of
198

685 ventriloquism is involved; certain practitioners are past masters
695 at it. The voices mention three names, which the practitioner
787 repeats aloud. Each of the presumed culprits must then bring a
198 fowl; these are slaughtered by the practitioner and their blood is poured on the ground. The first sign is deduced from the way in which the drops fall and the forms they take. The fowls are then cut open, and the position of the liver and the final contractions of nerves and muscles corroborate the first indications.

685 The totem plays only an inconspicuous part in this test,
695 which in any case is rarely used nowadays.

787 The most frequent test is the *akala-nkal*, thus called after the fetish *nkal*, which is kept in an antelope horn or large snail (*ngɔ̂̀n*). The practitioner heats water, mixing in different kinds of plants, and adds, to satisfy those who may think they are suspected, some of the ashes of their totemic sacrifice.

When evening comes, every man prepares a fire of wood and bamboo in front of his hut. The chief then goes through the brightly lit village, invoking guardian spirits and threatening the thief or thieves with terrible vengeance. Then he runs and jumps over all the bonfires, the men and women of the village following after him. If a man or woman should touch one of the brands with a foot so as to make it roll off the fire, that person is declared guilty. While undergoing the *nkal* test, the chief carries his totem in his hand. If all come through safely, the chief starts again on his own, this time holding the village totem, show everybody's innocence even more. [563]

After this first trial, which everyone usually gets through with the greatest ease, the one or more accused if such there be, if not, all the men of the village, take a drink of lustral water which the practitioner has just boiled; then they take a few steps and spit on the *nkal*, which has been put on the ground. Each person then steps over the *nkal*, swearing his innocence, and starts once more to leap over all the bonfires. If he is not hurt, he is declared innocent. It is extremely rare that, from the effects of the poison or for some other reason, one or another does not stumble over a brand and knock it out of the fire. He is thereupon declared guilty; if he denies it, he will have to drink the *ɛlûń*; if on the contrary, he saves his life but has to repay the theft twice over.

683
781
695
278

This is the most frequent test among the Fan.

Anyone accused of sorcery, or all those who have succumbed during the first tests, must drink the ordeal poison. This ceremony has been described so often that there is no need to go into it at length.

In the Fan test-poison ordeal three different poisons are used, according to the case in question: the sap of the élûn tree; the grated bark and roots of the oné or onaî; (1) the roots of the shrub kwéa. (2) These roots are finely shredded, thrown into boiling water and a reddish liquid is obtained after a few hours of simmering. This highly dangerous brew contains in solution a considerable amount of strychnine and hyoscine.

683
781
695

The ngenngâñ, or practitioner, begins by sacrificing a she-goat, with the formulae already indicated. Next, all the villagers assemble, and the practitioner appears in red and white paint, with red parrot feathers and black fish hawk plumes stuck into his hair to form a crown. His only garment consists of a skin tied around his loins, and he wears many bells on his hands and feet. [564] He invokes the protective fetishes of the village, leaps, skips, and howls frenetically. The tom-tom played by one of his acolytes is beaten faster and faster; the practitioner's movements increase in tempo; little by little he seems to move by preference toward a group, the sound of his bells directing him, so he says. Finally he halts abruptly and points in the crowd

[411]

1. Strychnos onaî: this shrub of the strychnine family, produces the poison used on arrowheads. Puncture is fatal if the poison is fresh, and death ensues within a few moments. If the poison is old, the wound slowly becomes gangrenous. Bromine is a good antidote.

2. Strychnos ikaja: this is a common test on the coast, where kwéa, the natives say, is called ikaja, nka, mbonde, ibonde, etc.

688 to one or more culprits, who are immediately seized and led
695 to the middle of the public square, where one of the practitioner's
787 assistants is waiting with several cups of the liquid.

Those who, in previous ordeals, have asked to be given the poison to drink are also brought up at the same time.

Each in turn empties a cup: the effects vary according to the kind of poison.

Those who drink the élûṅ quickly develop a violent trembling, which convulses the whole body. They can hardly keep on their feet and would roll on the ground were they not supported by friends. If at this point they are able to urinate copiously, they will gradually recover and survive. However, for years they will have a persistent nervous tremor.

Those who drink the ikaja or the onaī seem, on the contrary, to be knocked out: they fall down, get up, and fall down again. They survive only if they can vomit the liquid.

Whatever the effect of the poison, all who have under-
gone the test are led before a log thrown like a bridge over a
brook, or sometimes before a plank or a dead tree laid on the
ground. They must tread it without help from one end to the
other. If they teeter and fall, all the participants leap on them,
[264] strike and kill them with clubs, tear them apart and eat them
on the spot. However, the sorcerers or those who claim to be
are never eaten but are burnt alive. Those who get through to
the end of the plank have to pay a large fine. "There's no
smoke without fire," seems to be the Fan proverb, translated
[538] into their idom as, "Ké abi fo ve fo -- there's no rat hole
without a rat!"

The totem enters to a fairly large extent into all these tests, either through the practitioner who invokes it or through the unfortunate accused who always have the right, quite illusory for them, to have a [565] piece of the totem boiled with the élûṅ (1) and to invoke it before drinking up the fatal

1. It is not for me to pass judgment on these ceremonies, or to show to what degree the practitioner plays the dominant role, often getting well paid

potion.

683 695 787 562 Women are not subject to the tests I have just mentioned except sometimes to the *nkal* test. Among the Fan they do not drink the test poison; they are, in fact, considered as irresponsible and in a state of tutelage. Therefore in cases of serious accustion, a woman's father or husband has to take her place but does not invoke the totem, because it would not be able to act on her behalf since it does not acknowledge the woman.

Only for an accusation of sorcery does a woman have to submit to a test.

She is brought gagged to the middle of the village, two female relatives pull her head back, and the practitioner empties [278] into her eye the sap of a euphorbia called *ka*. (2) If she comes through unhurt, she is innocent. If, on the contrary, as nearly always happens, the eye leaves the socket, she is immediately [266] declared guilty, dragged away into the forest, burnt, and eaten. The accusation frequently arises, and punishment is never delayed.

VIII. Blood Exchange

608 " 'Brotherhood' (in America, totemisation)," says Mgr. Le Roy, (3) "is relationship through an exchange of blood; if this is not quite totemism, it is very near to it."

---

683 695 787 for administering an effective emetic along with the test poison. I shall evaluate these ordeals later when discussing religion.

2. *Euphorbia scandens*, of the arboreal euphorbias.

3. *La religion des primitifs* [The Religion of Primitive Peoples] *op. cit.*, p. 120.

608

All primitive man's interests lead him to extend his relationships and alliances, that is, briefly, to enlarge his family. Therefore the exchange of blood has two rather different aspects. "By means of certain mysterious practices, certain actions and words that are kept secret among the initiated but that always involve an exchange of blood, it is possible first of all to gain an animal's favor, to make him follow and obey, to assume his various aspects as a disguise if need be, and to take advantage of his strength, [566] cunning, and skill. In a word, one can make a 'brother' of him, and perhaps this constitutes the basis of all totemism." (1)

Exchanging blood with an animal -- for all alliances with animals always include a blood exchange -- is therefore, in fact, the central, the first, and by far the most important of totemic rites. I went into this point at great length in discussing the origin of the totem and nagualism.

Yet if a man at the present time seeks above all a covenant with an animal, a temporary and personal alliance in the primitive sense, as Mgr. Le Roy properly points out, (2) by this alliance "man not only wants to get hold of the animal such as it is and link its family with his own, but he also and especially seeks that animal's family, as strengthened by the presence and activity of a spirit from the invisible world -- the animal's own soul, the spirit of the ancestors, the tutelary genius. . . ;" In a word, blood alliance is a pact with the invisible world.

What a man achieves with an animal, he would all the more like to effect with another man. This will be a powerful means of extending his personal relationships, his alliances, his "family." He chooses by preference, therefore, one whose friendship, power, and loyalty he values, and he concludes a pact of alliance that will be sanctioned by an exchange of blood in a special ceremony and according to special rites. With the

---

1. Le Roy, op. cit., p. 120.

2. Op. cit., p. 122.

608 rites completed, the two men become truly blood brothers, ndugu among the Swahili of the east coast, ndégo among the Mpongwe of the equator, angom among our Fan; these represent the same word, with the same root, the different forms resulting from differences in dialect.

Still, two conditions are necessary to blood exchange: in
608 the first place, a real operation is performed. Only chiefs make
622 this exchange, and believe themselves to be completely bound and, if need be, ready to give their lives for their blood brothers. They are thus in a position to exact reciprocity. Only the chiefs, as we have said, make blood brothers; for they alone are representatives of their race and guardians of the totem, consequently masters of the intrinsic virtue and strength of the tribe. Anyone other than the chief is therefore disqualified, [567] and the chief himself cannot appoint a delegate to take his place. Nevertheless, this does happen from time to time! A white man who chances by, perhaps an explorer, anxious to obtain the good will of an influential chief, or often a trader pursuing his business, may ask a chief to make him a "blood brother." The chief sees his own advantage here and readily agrees, knowing perfectly well that he is certain to receive many presents. The ceremony takes place, but the white man, who believes that he has gained his ends, is really very naive, for in most cases the chief will have appointed a deputy and the rite means nothing legally.

However, a chief does sometimes go through the ceremony himself but in that case the basic rites are abbreviated, often omitted. An African knows too well what he is undertaking and has no desire for a white blood brother. Yet in certain circumstances, and well aware of what he is doing, an African chief does really make a blood brother. Thus, for instance, a chief of Kilimanjaro, named Tumba, is blood brother to Mgr. Le Roy, (1) who has left us an interesting and thorough account

1. Voyage au Kilima-Ndjaro [Journey to Kilimanjaro] by Mgr. Le Roy; Mame, Tours. See also Ann. Prop. Foi. 1882,

F
608
622

p. 369 ff. [Annuaire de la Propagation de la Foi, Yearbook of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith].

of the ceremony and associated ritual.

The second condition is that the parties concerned be of different tribes and not have the same totem. This condition is essential and proceeds from the very nature of totemism.

The process of blood alliance or blood exchange is rather [171] curious. Among the Fan it is as follows and is found in precisely the same form in several Congo tribes somewhat related to the Fan, like the Wabuyu of the Upper Congo.

One of my mission colleagues recently described it thus: (1)

B
608
622

1. Bulletin des Pères Blancs d'Anvers [Bulletin of the White Fathers of Antwerp], n^o de mai [May] 1910.

"In the evening there is a loud beating of drums; several rifle shots followed by shouts of joy announce a festival. Urged by curiosity, I went in the direction of the noise and discovered that two chiefs were to effect a blood exchange that day. They came forward solemnly . . . the participants crowded around and let out bloodcurdling howls. The protagonists solemnly sit down on special seats [568], face to face, with their knees touching. A white cloth is thrown over them, and the ceremony begins.

"The minister [practitioner] of one of the chiefs of the village where I am stationed takes a small thin knife and makes an incision in the leg of the foreign chief, while the latter's minister does the same to the village chief. Each one spreads on a leaf a paste that looks like butter, and simultaneously both ministers rub the two incisions. They keep exchanging the leaves so that their masters' blood is thoroughly mixed, the better to seal the mutual friendship.

"At the same time ivory horns are sounded and drums beat martial airs, rather unreasonably, it seems to me, at a 'peace conference.' The music arouses angry passions in the

608 622 hearts of the crowd, which are translated into wildly savage cries.

"The ministers signal for silence with waves of the hand, and deliver short addresses to their masters, of which the gist is more or less: 'You have concluded a blood pact. Your reciprocal friendship will never end. Should one of you be false to your given word, may he be broken like this leaf!'

"Adding gesture to speech they tear in pieces the leaves used in the ceremony. The two chiefs then stand up and announce in loud voices: 'Everything that I possess is yours -- children, slaves, subjects, cattle, and plantation. Should any man seek to harm you, I shall always be ready to avenge the injury.'

"Next, hand in hand they circle the group two or three times, at a slow and dignified pace. They are followed by about ten women ... dressed in native materials of wildly clashing colors. The women's hair has been elaborately braided, [301] necklaces of pearls and glass beads adorn their bosoms, enormous copper bracelets cover their forearms, and heavy iron rings encircle their ankles. At a signal from one of them, all the [481] women start to walk with swaying movements and a curious swinging of the hips [569], along with their most ingratiating gestures and enticing grins directed towards the delighted participants.

608 622 535 "Shortly afterwards, when the newly made friends have returned to their seats, a group of men comes out of the ranks of spectators, dressed in loincloths of many colors. The dancers salute the two majesties by giving three times a wild animal's roar, to which the crowd replies. The orchestra musicians madly compete on their instruments; dancers and spectators raise from powerful chests three more roars that would make the very lions tremble. This is the signal for the dance, the main attraction of the festival. Great and small leave their ranks and join the group. With feline flexibility they crawl, jump like leopards, rise up together, whirl around brandishing spears that gleam in the sun, leap upon an imaginary victim whom they trample in rage. Sweat pours down the naked, gleaming bronze bodies; to stave off their fatigue, the dances alternate with war

Buye F015

B
608 songs celebrating the achievements of the tribe's forefathers
622 and teaching contempt for death.
535 "Then comes the feast, from which women are strictly excluded."

F
608 A ceremony identical to that of the Wabuyu is found among the Ozèm Fan, which I have seen several times, and is
622 almost the same among the Dzandzama and Bakélé.

F
171 It is rather strange to find almost the same customs among the most ancient peoples. For instance, Herodotus wrote of the Scythians: "This is how the Scythians used to take an oath: they would pour wine into a large earthenware cup, and the parties to the oath would add their blood from slight cuts made on their bodies with knife or sword; a boar-spear, an axe, and a lance would then be dipped into the cup. They then recited long prayers and drank from the cup. The leading members of the court would drink after them." (1)

1. Herodotus, Book IV, Ch. 70.

F
779 Blood alliance is the last general totemic rite that we have to deal with. Next come particular rites. The totem usually plays a far less important part in these than in general rites, and we shall therefore be much less concerned with them. [570]

Chapter XVI

The Totem in Fan Life: Particular Rites

Summary:

1. Birth.
2. Adoption.
3. Marriage.
4. Hunting, fishing, husbandry.
5. Trade and palavers.
6. Diseases and death. The funeral dance and the fanki.

1. Birth and Name Giving

844 Only women, the village matrons, are allowed to help a mother in childbirth. Men are absolutely excluded, even husbands. A woman who gives birth on a journey prefers to go off by herself into the forest rather than ask for her husband's help.

As soon as the child is delivered, his umbilical cord is cut and he is carefully washed. The remnants of the cord are wrapped in a cloth and buried out of the way. In the case of a chief's son, especially that of the head chief, the remains are buried, as we have seen, at the foot of a sacred fig tree. (1) [824 778]

1. Ficus elastica.

Great importance is given to the tree's growth, and to touch it is strictly forbidden. Any violation of the tree would be considered an attack upon the human being. [688]

851 847 A few days after birth, the baby is carried to his father, who may accept it or refuse it. However, the latter [571] happens only if the child is deformed or crippled, in which case it is ruthlessly sacrificed. The religious rites (1) connected 553

1. See Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise de Géographie [Bulletin of the Neuchâtel Geographical Society], 1910, "Les rites de la naissance chez les Fân" ["Birth rites among the Fangs"], by Father Trilles.

with birth are numerous, but the only ones that seem to me to be totemic are name giving and the choice of the baby's totem.

The name is solely the father's choice; it is often determined by attendant circumstances, atmospheric or other, or by some local happening, a hunt, a fishing expedition, the

553 arrival of a stranger. Hence, a certain number of names that
at first would seem totemic, because they copy the names of
animals and plants, are not so at all. In general, the eldest
son's name is that of one of his forebears, a grandfather or
ancestor, who is thought to come to life again in him. Twins,
[845] however, always receive special names of matched things,
which go in twos, like Sun and Moon, Wind and Rain, Storm
and Thunder, etc.

851 As soon as the child has been given a name, his father
779 takes it in his arms and carries it into his hut, where he opens
the évora biéri and puts the baby down on the lid. He then
takes the ancestral skulls one by one and puts them on the
child's head, then places the family totem in its hand. The
father with his fingernail often scrapes a bit off of the antelope
horn holding the remnants of his personal totemic sacrifice,
and puts some of this into the child's mouth. This, strictly
speaking, is the dedication to the totem. The father then takes
the baby back to its mother so that she may anoint it with oil
and rub it with red wood. After the mother, or any other woman
present, has attended to this, the father again takes the child and
puts another bit of the totem into its mouth. A she-goat, a sheep,
or at least a fowl is then offered to the family totem and to the
spirits of the departed, according to sacred ritual. The remains
[779] of this sacrifice, the ashes, etc., are enclosed in a small
antelope horn, which is hung around the baby's neck or above his
genital organs: this will be his amulet. Finally, the father
gives the baby his personal totem, which will be recalled to him
later on when he is old enough to understand. At that same time
he will be taught what are the family, clan, and tribal totems,
and the duties and obligations they impose on him. This instruction is part of the mébara. [572]

2. Adoption

597 In certain cases, a few children are adopted by a head of
727 the family when given as ransom for murder or spared in the

591 727 sacking of a village. For, although in such cases all the men and able-bodied youths are ruthlessly killed and eaten, this does not apply to women and children, even to male children, who henceforth belong to the new tribe and will later be looked upon as warriors. [562] There is no ceremony for women or female children, since, as we have seen, the totem ignores them, and they have only one duty toward it, to hide in their huts as quickly as possible whenever there is talk of the totem, and never to mention it. Should this nevertheless happen, it would be an offense requiring expiation.

Male children are adopted by the various heads of a family. 591 Tribal or village chiefs have first choice, the rest of the warriors come after. The one or more children chosen by a chief, however, may never succeed him.

Adoption ceremonies are like those at birth. The adopted 591 344 child loses all his old totems in order to acquire those of the tribe he joins. There is just one additional ceremony, bloodletting. So as to prove his definitive entry into the tribe, he undergoes the following operation when led before the totem. With the mfor knife, a small steel blade kept for this purpose, the adoptive father makes a few slight scarifications on the child's left arm, collects the blood that flows, and throws it on the ancestral skulls, then on the akaméyôn. He then takes a fragment of skull and some totemic sacrificial ashes and rubs these vigorously on the child's arm. This is the true sign of adoption, by which the boy definitively enters his new family and is recognized as belonging to it entirely. Later on he may even be allowed to take a wife from his former tribe, in spite of the rules of exogamy, because adoption is so authentic

[348 563] Often the same bloodletting and blood alliance occur with illegitimate children or with mulattoes, but the object is then different. Adoption never takes place at birth but much later, so as to ensure for the child the ancestors' protection.

The same act often occurs when a child is ill. [573]

3. Marriage

119 562 583 I do not know of any truly totemic act among the complicated religious rites connected with marriage. This absence must come from the fact that women are considered to be in themselves independent of the totem.

584 119 Before marriage, especially before starting to make the rounds of the villages in order to pick out a future companion, a young man first builds a sort of triumphal arch in front of his hut. A creeper decorated with various bits of cheap finery, fabric, green leaves, flowering branches, and ava flowers, is stretched from his house to the one opposite, on the other side of the public square or the main street of the village. Before his hut two shrubs garnished in similar fashion have their tops bound together to form a triumphal arch. The young man opens the biéri box, removes his family totem and a skull and puts them before the statue of the biéri. Then for hours, endless songs and dances will be performed. When the young man is exhausted, one of his friends takes over. The songs and dances last far into the night and start again at dawn. No one may interrupt or even enter the hut, otherwise the entire ceremony would have to be begun all over again. A woman's glance at the biéri or totem, or that of a strange man, would be enough to bring this about. Therefore, one of the young man's friends is constantly on guard to prevent such an accident; he stands in front of the hut door and sees to it that people move along briskly.

[583] This rite only takes place when a youth is contemplating marriage by abduction. He wishes in this manner to gain the good will of the biéri, the ancestors, and the totem.

On the third day in the evening the ritual dances end.
[782] The young man immediately offers a final sacrifice, usually of a cock, a hen, and some maize, following the prescribed forms. Then, since he is not permitted to rest for even a moment, he starts out, carrying the cock, hen, and maize as his only provisions; he is not allowed to take along anything else.

595 585 Whatever the kind of marriage, the first wife is the only one considered [574] as truly legitimate. As soon as she enters her new hut, her husband leads her by the hand before the *évora biéri*, which is kept tightly closed. Throughout her life, the wife will never be allowed to look into the box, as that would entail a very grave ritual offense. She now takes a bit of palm oil brought from her own village, mixes it with some from her husband's mother, and rubs this symbolic mixture on the statue on top of the *évora*. [842] This is a symbol of the fertility she asks of the ancestors and the guardian spirits of the race. She next [782] puts a few grains of maize in a small basket at the base of the statue, so that her future plantations may thrive. This sacrifice should be repeated every morning, but only by the principal wife -- and it is often omitted.

4. Hunting, Fishing, Husbandry

788 779 Before starting on a hunting or fishing expedition, likewise before going out to the first work on his plantation, every family head or warrior will be sure to invoke his totem. He does this first with an offering on the *biéri* box, then by touching his weapons, tools, or snares against the family totem.

788 224 779 In the case of hunting, the hunter, when charing his gun, mixes some of the ashes of totemic sacrifice with his small shot, puts his hand on his totem, and leaves confident of the outcome. Even if hunting does not come up to expectation, he would never dream of blaming his totem. He would think that he had had bad luck or, more likely, that he had committed some offense.

788 226 779 When going fishing, he carries some of the sacrificial ashes hidden in a rag. At the spot he thinks propitious, he always begins by throwing the ashes into the water, in order to obtain his totem's good will.

788 241 779 Likewise, when a man starts farming, at the beginning of each dry season, before giving the first ax blow to the trees to be cut down, he places some ashes or remnants of sacrifice in some kind of hole and sees to it that they are consumed by the

779
778 fire which he sets to the felled trees so as to make the necessary
241 fertilizer needed for his future crops. [575]

Returning from hunting or fishing, a man is always sure to
782 put an offering on the évora biéri: it may be a piece of the ani-
224 mal's heart and brain or part of the first fish caught, even the
226 whole fish if it is very small. The first fruits are also placed on
779 the évora. Any infraction of these rites leads to punishment that can only be atoned for by one or more sacrifices. A warrior will infallibly recognize punishment in the failure of hunting or fishing trips or in barren plantations.

The hunting or fishing offering is made by the head of the family, that of first fruits by the first wife.

5. Trade and Palavers

788 Whenever a Fan has to "talk," he is very careful to try
537 to gain his totem's good will beforehand. On such occasions
779 it is important that he be able to convince his fellow speakers or his adversaries.

The totem ceremony is very short. Before leaving for the palaver or on a trading trip, he removes from the biéri box some of the ashes of the last sacrifice and puts them into a rag, closes the box, and goes off contented.

Before beginning to "talk," he will open the package of ashes and puts a bit on his forehead, lips, and throat. Thus the spiritual guardians of the race will aid his brain and inspire him with the best thoughts and the best phrases, and thus they will tell him the best words to use to convince his adversaries and obtain what he wants.

6. Disease and Death

755 The totemic ceremonies connected with disease and death
779 are of somewhat more consequence. As soon as a man falls gravely ill, the practitioner is called in. He demands in advance, to be on the safe side, the proper payment for his pains, and then

755 779 goes to the sick man's hut. A variety of remedies are used, among them always a dance in honor of the totem. After the dance and the driving out of the evil spirits [576] that torment the sick man, a sacrifice is made, often of a she-goat, a sheep, or at least a fowl. The sick man always has to eat some of this sacrifice, and the practitioner mixes into it fragments of the patient's family totem, as he does into any potions administered. If the sick man recovers, he will have to offer a black hen on the *évora biéri* before he leaves his hut. The hen will then be burnt according to the sacred rituals.

764 779 If the man dies, his eldest son closes his eyes and straightens the arms and legs before they become stiff, after which the corpse may not be touched, under grave penalties. The lamentations begin, but in an undertone; the dead man's wives gather around him, tear at their arms and legs, and with the blood that flows sprinkle the corpse. He is then covered with his fetishes and at his side is the *mébup* on which his family totem is hung. After the first lamentations are over, the commotion quiets down and only the dead man's wives continue to weep.

In the morning the eldest son and heir offers a sacrifice to the deceased's family totem so that it may continue to favor the survivors. He puts some of the victim's blood into the mouth of the corpse and also takes some in his own mouth. He then completes the sacrifice according to the customary rites.

Before the burial another sacrifice will be made in order to determine the location of the grave and to make sure that the dead man is satisfied. The corpse is made to partake of this sacrifice too.

At the appropriate time, the dead man is placed in the grave dug for him; his family totem lies beside him, and, if he is a tribal chief, the clan or tribal totem is also placed at his side. This is left to him for a few moments, then the heir removes it, so as to "take possession."

765 779 The same ceremonies are observed when the skull is removed, 30 days after death.

7 765 779 This skull cannot, however, be put into the évora biéri right away, it must first be "acknowledged." The rite is analogous to that of the chief's initiation, which has already been described. The skull [577] is carried into the forest, placed upon a kind of altar, and a victim is immolated in its honor. It is sprinkled with lustral water, then with blood. The chief's heir then takes the skull and makes it first "acknowledge" the ancestral skulls, then successively the family and clan totems, and ends with the tribal totem.

768 779 Thirty days after death the *funeral dances* or fanki also take place, and then the division of the deceased's property, particularly his wives. His hut usually stays closed throughout this time, with the door barred and the roof covered with thorns so that the deceased's spirit cannot re-enter the house, which would mean making further sacrifices.

The mortuary rites are very complicated and very solemn among the Fan, especially for an important chief. I have here referred only to totemic rites. The totem will live again later in the person of one of the descendants, usually the grandson, who, in many cases, will have both the name and the totem of his grandfather. [55]

[p. 578-663 not translated]

Fang Bibliography

A. French Authors

113 Rev. Allégret, La Religion des Fân. Revue des Religions 1905.
Alexis, le Congo français. Tours 1890. Chez Mame et Challamel.
Alis (H.), Vers le Tchad. Paris 1891.
Mgr. Augouard, 28 Années au Congo. Paris 1905.
Avelot (lieutenant). Dans la Boucle de l'Ogowé. Bull. Sté de Gie Commer. Paris 1901.
— Recherches sur les migrations de la Gabonie. 1905.
Dr. Barret, L'Afrique occidentale. Sénégambie et Guinée. La région gabonaise. Paris 1888. Challamel.
Barrat, Bulletin Sté de Gie. Paris 1896.
[illegible], de Lastourville à Samba. Paris 1888.
— Les races du Gabon. Bull. Sté Anthr. de Paris. T. XVI. 1893.
R. P. Bichet, Miss. Cathol. 1884.
Bonis, Nègres du Gabon. Bull. Sté Anthr. de Paris. T. IV. 1863.
Bourdarie, Le Congo français. Paris 1891.
— A la côte du Congo français. 1897.
Braouezec, Bulletin Sté de Gie. Paris 1861.
de Brazza, Tour du Monde. 1887. 1888. 1888.
— Bulletin Sté de Gie. XVIII. Paris 1879.
Bruel, Les populations de la Moyenne-Sangha. Revue d'ethnologie et de sociologie 1910.
R. P. Buléon, Ann. Prop. Foi. 1888.
Bulletin de la Société des Missions Evangéliques protestantes 1905, 1906, 1908.
du Chaillu, L'Afrique équatoriale. Paris 1863.
Chevalier (A.), L'Afrique centrale française. Paris 1908. Challamel.
Compiègne, L'Afrique équatoriale. Paris 1875.
Cottes, La Mission Cottes au Sud-Cameroun. Paris 1910.
— Pahouins et Pygmées. La Géogie, Juillet 1909.
Cureau, Bulletin Sté de Gie. Paris 1896.
Decazes, bulletin Sté Normande. Rouen 1888.
Dutreuil de Rhins, Le Congo français. Paris 1885.
Duval, Les Nègres du Gabon. Bull. Sté Anthr. de Paris. 1863.
Dybowski, La Route du Tchad. Paris 1893.

---

113 Fleuriot de Langle, Le Tour du Monde. Paris 1877. Croisières sur les côtes de l'Atlantique.
Foret, Le Fernan-Vaz. Bulletin Sté de Gie. Paris 1898.
Fourneau, Bulletin Sté de Gie. De l'Ogowé au Campo. XVI. Paris 1891.
Frass, La Côte ouest du Gabon. Paris 1908.
Froment, Bulletin Sté de Gie. X. Lille 1889.

Gacon, Exercices de lecture français-fang.
Guillemin, Le Congo français. Paris 1889.
Guillemot, Notice sur le Congo français. Paris 1901.
Guiral, Le Congo français. Paris 1889.

Hallez d'Arros, Colonisation du Congo français. Paris 1899. Challamel.
Haug, Le Bas Ogowé. Ann. de Géogr. 1903.
Hedde, Bulletin Sté de Gie. Paris 1868—69.
— Notes sur les populations du Gabon. La Géogie 1874.

Jardin, Bulletin Sté de Gie. Rochefort 1883—84.
Jeannest, Quatre années au Congo. 1883.

R. P. Lejeune, Miss. Cathol. 1895.
— Au Congo, la Femme et la Famille. Desclée. Lille 1900.
— Dictionnaire Français-Fang. Paris 1892.
Lalov, Anthropologie S. 12. Paris 1910. Challamel.
Marche, Journal L'Explorateur. 1876.
R. P. Martrou, Les Eki des Fâ. Anthropos I (1906).
Mizon, Voyage de Crampel. Bulletin Sté de Gie. Paris 1890.

R. P. Neu, Lettres sur Lambaréné. Annales de la Prop. de la Foi. 1888.

Payeur-Didelot, Bull. Sté de Gie de Nancy. Trente mois au Continent mystérieux. 1895.
A. Pittard, Notes sur quelques crânes Fâ. Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de Neufchâtel 1899. (Supplément.) — Nouvelles Notes, même Bulletin 1910.
Ponel, La Hte Sangha. Bulletin Sté de Gie. Paris 1886 et 1888.

Du Quilio, Voyage dans l'Ogowé. Rev. Marit. et Col. 1874.

Reclus, Géogr. Universelle. — L'Afrique.
Regismanset, Revue Coloniale. 1900.
H. Rellot, J. de Brazza au Congo. Gazette Géogr. 1877.
Ricard, Notes sur le Gabon. Rev. Col. 1884.
Roche, Au pays des Pahouins. Paris 1904.
Rouget, L'Expansion coloniale au Congo français. 1889.
Mgr. Le Roy, La Religion des Primitifs. Paris 1909, p. 77, 113, 149, 198, 316 et passim.

[p. 121]

R. P. Trilles, Dans les Rivières de la Mondah. Miss. Cathol. 1894 — Desclée 1910. 113

— Au pays Fân. Société de Géogr. de Lille 1902.

— Carte du Pays Fân, déposée au Ministère des Colonies.

— Contes et Légendes fân. Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de Neufchâtel 1898.

— Exercices de lecture et écriture fang-français. Libreville 1902.

— Les Fân, où ils vont, d'où ils viennent. Miss. Cathol. 1898.

— Les Fân. Société de Géogr. de Bordeaux 1901.

— Mille Lieues dans l'Inconnu — Au pays des Fân. Miss. Cathol. 1901.

— Quinze années au pays fân. Desclée 1912.

Trivier, Bulletin Sté de Géo. Rochefort 1885—86.

Voulgre (Dr.), Le Congo français. Paris 1897.

Plus un certain nombre d'articles dans:

Le Dépêche Coloniale — Revue indigène — Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique — Le Tour du Monde — Annales maritimes et coloniales — Questions diplomatiques — Annales apostoliques des Pères du St Esprit.

B. German Authors

Dr. Güssfeldt, Zeitschr. der Ges. für Erdkunde zu Berlin X. 1875.

Hartmann, Zeitschr. der Ges. für Erdkunde zu Berlin. 1903. (Les cris fatidiques chez les Fangs.)

Dr. Lenz, Geogr. Blätter I. 1877, p. 74.

— Der Ogo-wai, Peterm. Mitt. 1883.

— Zeitschr. d. Ges. für Erdkunde zu Berlin. 1878.

C. English Authors

Bennett, Journ. Anthr. Inst. London 1899.

Burton, A day among the Fans. Anthr. Review. I.

Miss Mary Kingsley, Travels in West Africa. Scott. Geogr. Mag. London 1896.

Marling, Diction. Fang-français. New-York 1873.

Nassau, Journ. Afric. Societ. 1903—04.

R. B. N. Walker, Proceed. of the Roy. G. Sty XVII. 1873.

D. Spanish Authors

Bulletin de la Sté Royale de Madrid. 1904. Le Muny espagnol.

[p.122]